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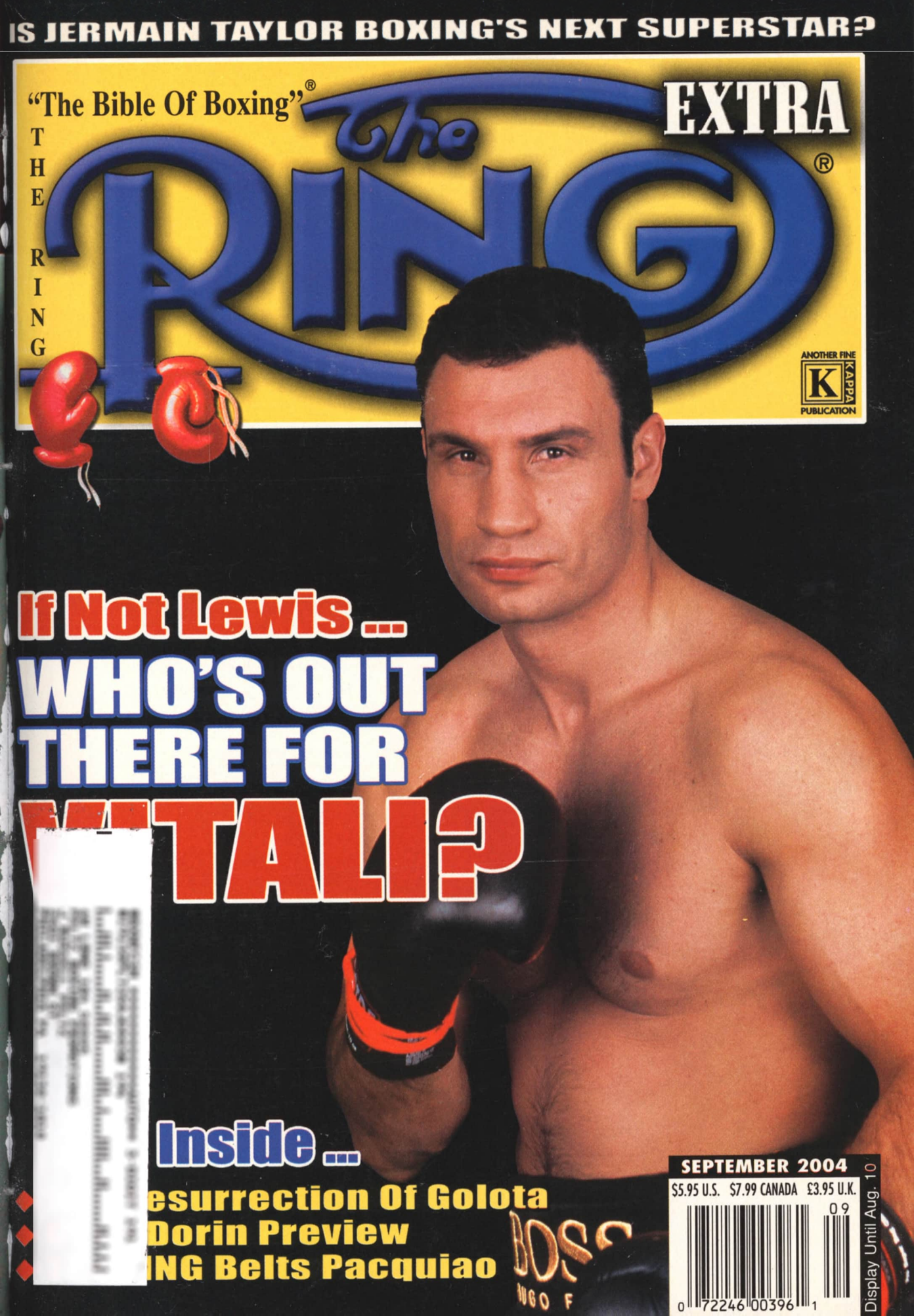

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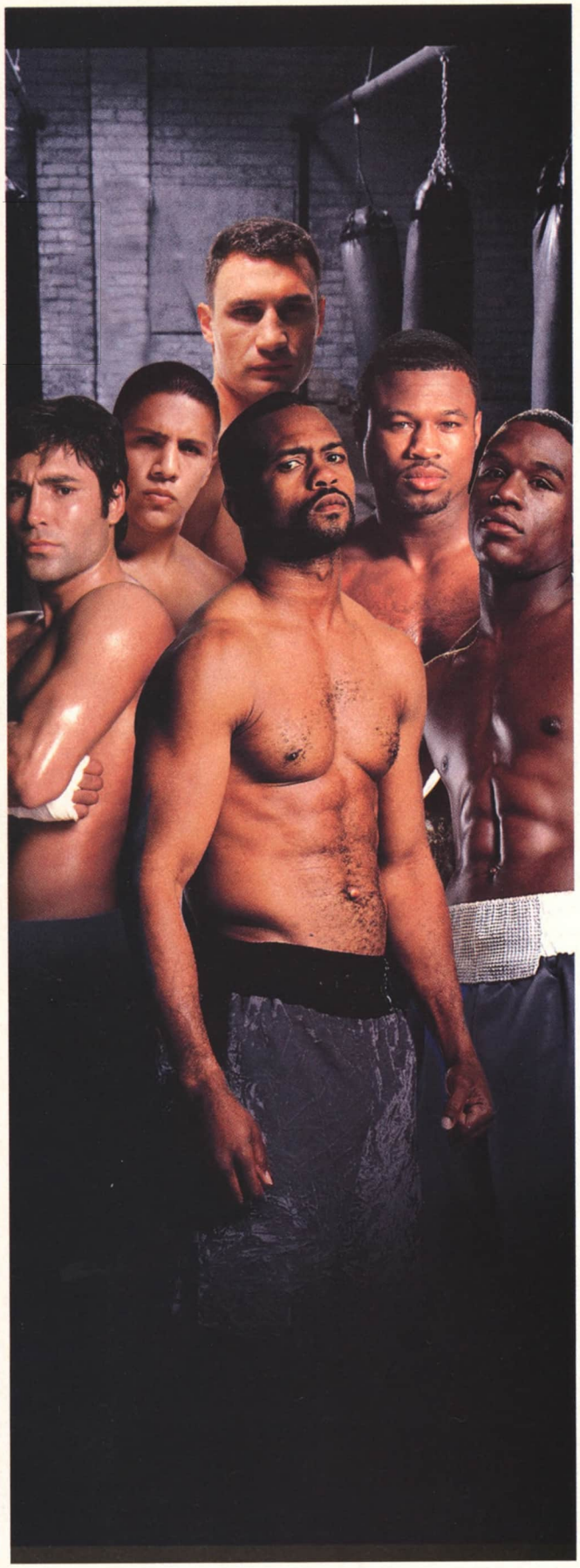

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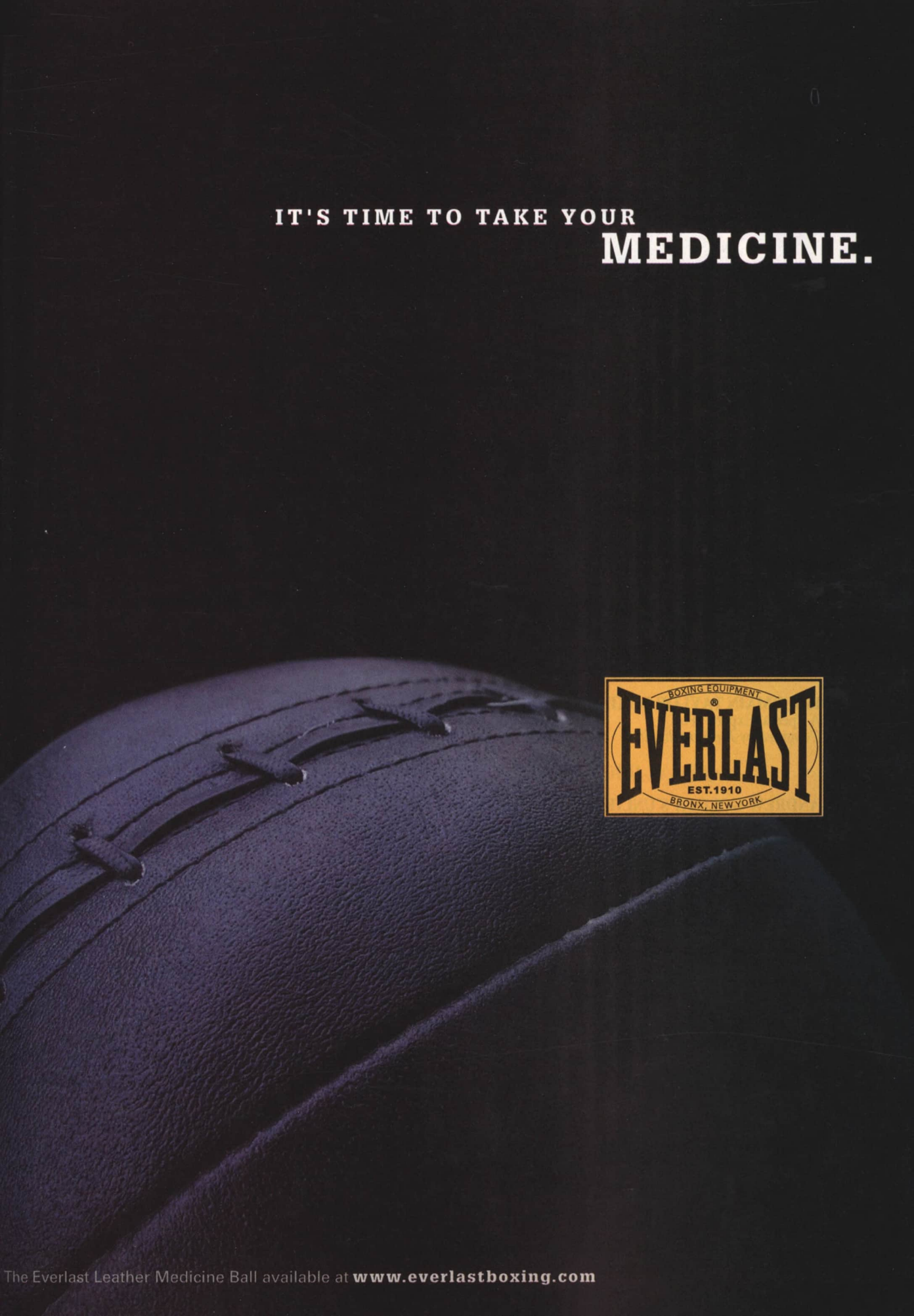
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CONTENTS

September 2004

FEATURES

26 **THE VITALI KLITSCHKO PHENOMENON**
How Did A Ukraine-Born, Germany-Bred Fighter Become An American Hero?
By Eric Raskin

32 **IS JERMAIN TAYLOR BOXING'S NEXT SUPERSTAR?**
A Special Experts' Poll
Compiled by Joe Santoliquito

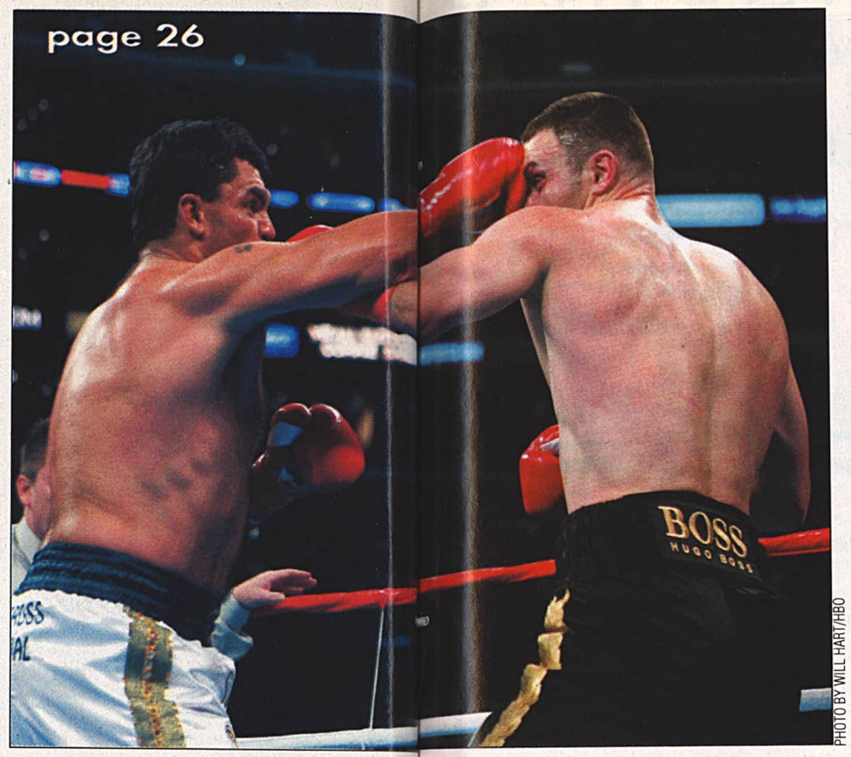
38 **ANDREW GOLOTA'S UNLIKELY RESURRECTION**
And You Thought You'd Seen The Last Of Him
By Nigel Collins

44 **ARTURO GATTI'S PERFECT OPPONENT**
Can Dorin Pick Up Where Ward Left Off?
By William Dettloff

52 **BELTING PAC-MAN IN THE PHILIPPINES**
Bringing Honor To A World Champion A World Away
By Nigel Collins

60 **KID GLOVES**
A Look At The Second-Generation Phenomenon
By Don Stradley

66 **1920s HEAVYWEIGHT K.O. CHRISTNER**
He Played Catcher To Jack Dempsey And Babe Ruth
By Pete Ehrmann



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Cover:
Vitali Klitschko courtesy of Sportfive

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Monica Fisher

Ringside Reports And Analyses

74 FIGHTER OF THE MONTH & RINGSIDE REPORTS

Ratings

13 RATINGS ANALYSIS

14 THE RING'S INTERNATIONAL RATINGS AND RECORDS

86 THE ALPHABET RATINGS

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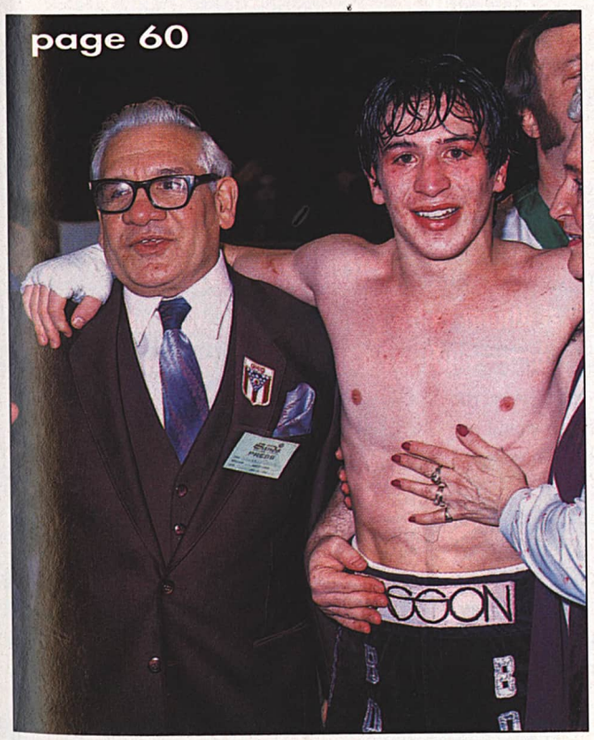

DEPARTMENTS

6 RINGSIDE, *by Nigel Collins*

8 ROUND ONE

16 RYAN OUT LOUD, *by Jeff Ryan*

18 DIGGING DEEP, *by Ivan Goldman*

20 BEING THERE: Hammerstein Ballroom, *by Robert Mladinich*

22 CAMERA CLICKS

24 NEW FACES: Light Heavyweight Rico Hoye, *by Joe Santoliquito*

72 WORLDWIDE FIGHT RESULTS

88 THE RING CLASSIC: SOMEBODY UP THERE DOESN'T LIKE ME, *by Eddie Machen*

94 THE FIGHT DOCTOR, *by Margaret Goodman, M.D.*

96 COME OUT WRITING

98 LOOKING AHEAD, *by Eric Raskin*

RINGSIDE

In order for it to work the way we want it to, THE RING championship policy depends to a significant degree on boxers being honorable men. That's because we do not force mandatory defenses or strip champions of their titles. Instead, we count on the fighters who wear THE RING belt to defend it on a regular basis against the best challengers.

Under this system it sometimes takes a while for things to work themselves out, which isn't always popular with those who crave instant gratification. But the case of Paulie Ayala illustrates how well our policy works to the benefit of the sport if given half a chance.

When Ayala and Bones Adams signed to fight a rematch in 2002, the WBA stripped Ayala of its bantamweight title and Adams of its junior featherweight belt because the organization wanted to force both into mandatory defenses that nobody outside of the WBA and the challengers' camps were interested in seeing. At the time, THE RING junior featherweight title was vacant, with Adams and Ayala ranked number one and number two, respectively. Therefore, the match qualified as a title bout under our criteria for filling vacancies, and we recognized winner Ayala as the new world champion.

Although he could still make the junior feather limit of 122 pounds, in his next bout Ayala moved up to challenge WBC featherweight titleholder Erik Morales. When he lost, Ayala informed us that he intended to drop back down to junior featherweight and defend his RING belt. That never happened, and we went through an uncomfortable period with an inactive champion heading the division. But rather than violate our policy for convenience's sake, we hung in there, trusting that Ayala would do the right thing, and in early-May he did, informing THE RING in writing that he was relinquishing the 122-pound belt to campaign at 126 *(see page 96)*.

Ayala was among the first fighters to benefit from what we believe is a workable alternative to the alphabet madness, and now he's shown the world that he's also a true champion outside of the ring.

Thanks, Paulie. In a quiet way you've become a pioneer in helping THE RING restore integrity to championship boxing.

***

While on the subject of world champions, I want to congratulate Vitali Klitschko on winning THE RING heavyweight championship belt with his TKO of Corrie Sanders *(see page 26)*. While there has been disagreement in some quarters with our decision to recognize Klitschko as the new champion, I was heartened to see that approximately 80 percent of fans responding to an HBO online poll agreed with us.

***

My recent visit to the Philippines was a fantastic adventure *(see page 52)* that gave me a far greater appreciation of that country's love of the Sweet Science and allowed me to meet many of the people in the Filipino boxing community. But the trip would not have been possible without the help of many individuals and organizations. Therefore, I would like to take up a few lines to thank some of the folks responsible for making my Asian expedition such a resounding success: Philippines President Gloria Arroyo, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza and his staff, Viva Entertainment, Reli Tours and Travel Agency, PAGCOR, Renato S. Lirio, the Elorde family, Ronnie Nathanielsz, Joaquin "Quinito" Hensen, Hermie Rivera, Dennis Principe, Nick Giongco, Salven Lagumbay, Recah Trinidad, Bong Pedralvez, Josef Ramos, Marlon Bernardino, Rose Santos, Adley Deutsch, and last but not least, the Lerner family, Ted, Aurora, Shanti, and Clown.

Nigel Collins
Editor-in-Chief

Volume 83, No. 10 September 2004

The Ring

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ADVERTISING DIRECTOR
Vincent Bellissima
(215) 643-6385
vbellissima@kappapublishing.com

ADVERTISING ASSISTANT
Dianne Weber

SUBSCRIPTION INQUIRIES
London Publishing Co.
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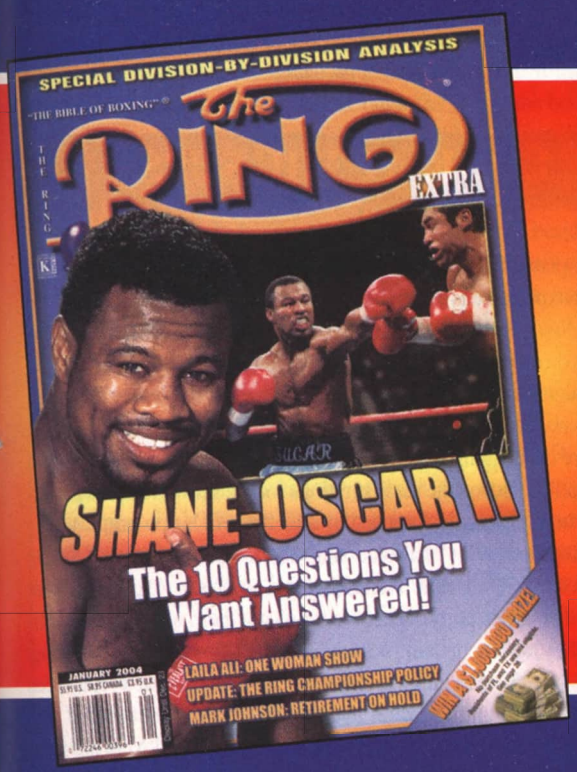

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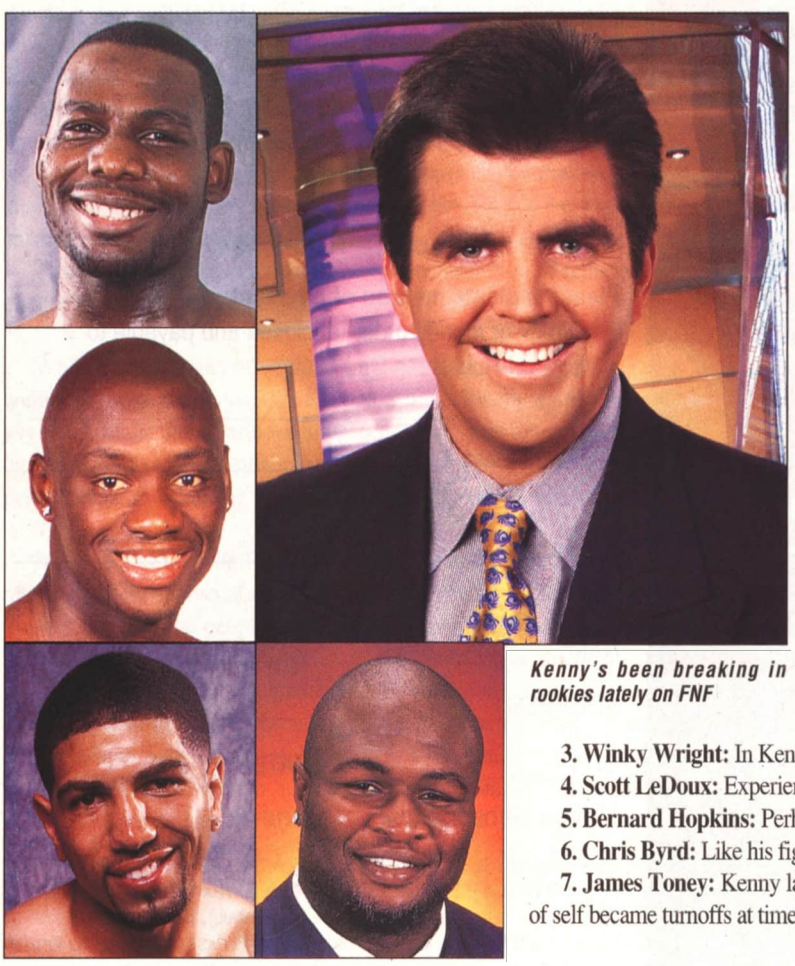
ROUND ONE

A SUBJECTIVE LOOK AT THE SUBS

In the movies, the veteran cop is always pissed off when he learns he's getting a new rookie partner. Why wouldn't he be? Breaking in someone inexperienced makes the veteran's job twice as difficult.

Since Max Kellerman left ESPN, *Friday Night Fights* studio host Brian Kenny has been the veteran cop stuck with the rookie. And to make matters worse, he's been trapped in the *Groundhog Day* of cop movies: Every Friday, he wakes up and has to go through the same thing he went through the week before with a *different* partner. With a new guest co-host every week—most of them fighters who are inexperienced at broadcasting—Kenny's job is quite a bit more challenging than it was when he had old, reliable Kellerman by his side. But so far, he's loved the challenge, he's loved the results (ratings for the show are up 20 percent from the same time period in 2003), and he's been pleasantly surprised by the efforts of his co-hosts.

"Through the years at ESPN, I've worked with a lot of rookie analysts in different sports," Kenny said. "The first show is never a finished product; it's usually something that improves exponentially as the weeks go on. These fighters don't have that opportunity. What we're asking them to do is very difficult, and I've been very pleased with how they've responded. Nobody came in with an attitude, saying, 'You're lucky to have me.' In that sense, it's really been delightful. I didn't expect the show to be as good as it has been with these guest co-hosts. And Max has actually told me the same thing, that he's really been enjoying watching these guys."



Kenny's been breaking in rookies lately on FNF

The biggest challenge for Kenny and the producers of *FNF* has been in getting the co-hosts comfortable and relaxed in front of the camera. To help with that, most of them have done what the ESPN gang calls "going through the car wash": going on ESPN radio earlier in the day, appearing on *The Hot List* on ESPNews, and maybe even sitting down for *SportsCenter's* "Budweiser Hot Seat," as Bernard Hopkins did. By the time they're done with all that, *FNF* feels like just another part of their work day.

As of press time, seven men had appeared in the studio with Kenny, and all performed admirably. Here are one man's rankings of just how admirably they performed:

1. Hasim Rahman: Engaging personality and quick wit shined through

2. Antonio Tarver: Broke the ice with class and insight as first replacement co-host

3. Winky Wright: In Kenny's words, he "sparkled"

4. Scott LeDoux: Experienced broadcaster was opinionated as always

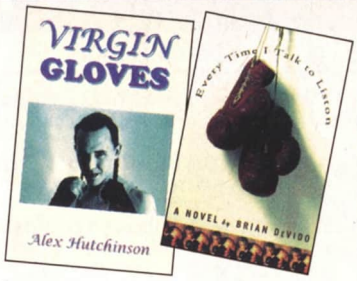
5. Bernard Hopkins: Perhaps a bit too reined in, but that's better than the opposite

6. Chris Byrd: Like his fights, highly competent, but a little bland

7. James Toney: Kenny labeled him the most fun, but trash-talking and trumpeting of self became turnoffs at times

—Eric Raskin

THE BOXING BOOKSHELF



Alex Hutchinson believes his gay boxing novel, *Virgin Gloves* (iUniverse Inc., 230 pages, soft cover, $15.95), is breaking new ground, but a number of novels, plays, and films have already covered the same territory. These projects always fall through the cracks because they're impossible to market and because most authors, Hutchinson included, are not clever enough to weave the gay storyline into the boxing plot.

Virgin Gloves follows Ash Hatcher, a stand-in for the author (you know you're in trouble when an author puts his own face on the cover of his book) and a hardcore boxing fan. He challenges his pals to Playstation boxing matches, writes letters to all of the major boxing publications, and enters Toughman contests to prove his manliness. He's also an ultra-fem bisexual who wears his hair in pigtails and isn't shy about his love for men. Before you can say *Queer Eye For The Fight Guy*, Ash is smitten with the young fighter he's been hired to publicize.

Hutchinson could have written a campy version of *The Harder They Fall*, but instead turns his story into a bully pulpit for his views on bisexuality, and by the time Ash gets it on with the object of his desire, you'll have read enough stilted dialogue to make you swear off self-published debut novels forever. Still, *Virgin Gloves* is not entirely unreadable. When he's not being too self-absorbed, Hutchinson has a sly humor and a genuine fondness for the sport. It's when he becomes melodramatic that the book falters.

Even if the idea of gay boxer-on-journalist sex makes you squeamish, Hutchinson has at least tried to give us something besides a Rocky Balboa rehash. For that, he's to be commended, even if the end result is not a winner.

—Don Stradley

Brian DeVido's debut novel, *Every Time I Talk To Liston* (Bloomsbury, $22.95, hardcover, 256 pages), can't decide if it wants to be a gritty slice-of-life story or a feel-good tale of friendship and fisticuffs. It's as if the author started out wanting to be Joyce Carol Oates, but then remembered how much he'd enjoyed *Rocky III*. The result is mildly entertaining, but like so many boxing stories, more than a little predictable.

The title of the book comes from the lead character's fascination with Sonny Liston, a device that almost backfires since Liston's life is far more interesting than anything DeVido can dream up. The author, a former Virginia Golden Gloves winner who has also worked as a sportswriter, is kind to his characters, but gets bogged down in turgid fight descriptions and empty platitudes about life.

The story follows Amos "Scrap Iron" Fletcher, a journeyman at the end of his career, and his efforts to train a flaky heavyweight in line for a title shot. There's also a kindly old-timer who runs a small boxing gym, and an arrogant heavyweight champion who can't control his temper during press conferences. Sound familiar?

But for all of the recycled ideas, there are moments where DeVido shows a quiet confidence in his material, such as when Fletcher describes the usefulness of an old-fashioned step-jab, but just as his characters are lured by the bright lights of Las Vegas, DeVido is lured by the bright lights of pompous fight literature, going on and on about "the beautiful brutality" of the sport without making it seem especially brutal or beautiful.

—Don Stradley

NEWS FLASH: BOXING'S A TOUGH SPORT!

PHOTO BY HOLLY STEIN/HBO

This is one of the many reasons boxing is the toughest sport

If you were flabbergasted and outraged by the *USA Today* article back in February that didn't list a single boxer among the world's 10 toughest athletes—and in fact included more golfers (two) than hockey players (one)—you'll be happy to know that a somewhat similar list published by ESPN.com in late-April got it right. Based on the opinions of a panel of experts who helped compile the "Ultimate Degree Of Difficulty Grid," boxing was rated the most demanding sport of the 60 considered.

A panel of eight experts from varied backgrounds rated the demands of the 60 sports in 10 categories: endurance, strength, power, speed, agility, flexibility, nerve, durability, hand-eye coordination, and analytic aptitude. Boxing received particularly high scores in nerve, endurance, power, durability, and strength, and came in with a total score of 72.375, narrowly edging out ice hockey (71.75) for the top spot. The margin of victory was a bit close for comfort, but we'll take it.

And in case you're curious, golf finished in 51st place, just ahead of cheerleading. That sounds a little more like it. Let's just hope the *USA Today* editors consult with their boxing writer, Dan Rafael, before they again try to tell us that Tiger Woods and Annika Sorenstam are tougher than Arturo Gatti, Bernard Hopkins, and everyone else who participates in the world's most difficult sport.

TV FIGHTS OF THE MONTH

DATE	WINNER/LOSER	NETWORK	DIVISION	SIGNIFICANCE	MATCHUP	RESULT
4-10-04	**Cory Spinks W 12 Zab Judah**	**HBO**	**World w**	**A**	**A**	**B-**
Proof that when all else is about equal, discipline and good fundamentals beat talent						
4-10-04	Lamon Brewster KO 5 Wladimir Klitschko	HBO	h	A-	C+	C+
Wlad, you forgot these: The stoppage was quick, you had personal problems, the sun was in your eyes …						
4-15-04	Jeremy Williams KO 8 Attila Levin	Show	h	C	B+	C+
Wonder how many times a round Dundee said to himself, "Muhammad wouldn't have gotten hit with that"						
4-15-04	Jameel McCline KO 1 Wayne Llewelyn	Show	h	B-	D+	D-
Wayne, Wimpy Halstead called; he said you're giving really weird-looking bald fighters a bad name						
4-17-04	Nurhan Suleyman KO 6 Archak Ter-Meliksetian	NBC	jm	C+	A-	C+
Aren't any fighters named Bob anymore? Or Phil?						
4-17-04	Juan Diaz KO 2 Martin O'Malley	NBC	l	B-	C	C
Nice matchmaking, guys; O'Malley couldn't have held off Diaz with a pick-ax						
4-17-04	**Wayne Braithwaite W 12 Louis Azille**	**PPV**	**WBC c**	**B+**	**B**	**C+**
This was on its way to being a corker before Braithwaite busted his hand						
4-17-04	Ricardo Mayorga W 10 Eric Mitchell	PPV	m	B+	C	C-
Anyone else think Arthur Mercante Jr. should cut back on his caffeine intake before working a fight?						
4-17-04	**John Ruiz KO 11 Fres Oquendo**	**PPV**	**WBA h**	**B**	**C-**	**F**
Your pay-per-view dollars hard at work; thanks, guys, for making us wish we'd fallen for bowling instead						
4-17-04	**Chris Byrd D 12 Andrew Golota**	**PPV**	**IBF h**	**A-**	**C-**	**B+**
Keep crying about how bad the heavyweights are; this was an excellent fight between two very skilled guys						
4-23-04	Dorian Beaupierre D 10 Daniel Edouard	ESPN2	m	C	B	C-
We'd say let them fight a third time, but really, the first two weren't exactly Gatti-Ward; let's move on already						
4-23-04	Manuel Gomez D 10 Hector Quiroz	Telef	jm	B-	B+	A
Let's start a petition to have these two fight one another every week for the next three years						
4-24-04	Ian MacKillop W 8 Robert Garcia	NBC	jm	C	A-	C
Hey, get with the program, MacKillop; this series only works if the white guy loses						
4-24-04	Rocky Juarez W 10 Joe Morales	NBC	jl	B	B-	C+
Juarez climbs off deck to notch another deliberate, hard-fought win; get used to him—he's going to be here a while						
4-24-04	**Vitali Klitschko KO 8 Corrie Sanders**	**HBO**	**World h**	**A+**	**B-**	**B+**
No one's saying he's Joe Louis, but Vitali is now the man at heavyweight						
4-29-04	Mike Anchondo Tech. Win 5 Jose Luis Soto	HBO L	jl	C+	C-	C+
No matter how far he goes, Anchondo is going to spill a lot of plasma along the way						
4-29-04	Fernando Montiel KO 3 Samuel Lopez	HBO L	b	B-	D-	C-
Montiel taking a very slow ride back; he's better than this and should show it against better guys						
4-30-04	Damien Fuller W 12 Lamar Murphy	ESPN2	l	C+	B+	B-
Excellent showing by Fuller, who survives 12th-round knockdown to get win						
4-30-04	Jesse James Leija Tech. Win 8 Marteze Logan	Telef	jw	C+	D-	D+
Can anyone remember the last time Leija didn't bleed?						
5-1-04	Aslanbek Kodzoev W 8 Rasheem Brown	NBC	jm	C	A-	C
Wasn't exactly the Philadelphia slugfest we might have hoped for, but at least it wasn't Ruiz-Oquendo						
5-1-04	Kermit Cintron KO 6 Elio Ortiz	NBC	w	B-	B	C+
Is it us, or does Cintron look and punch like a light heavyweight?						
5-1-04	Macelino Masoe KO 2 Evans Ashira	Show	m	C	B	D+
Good for Masoe, but calling him a world champion is an insult to anyone who's ever been one						
5-1-04	**Kelvin Davis KO 8 Ezra Sellers**	**Show**	**IBF c**	**C+**	**A-**	**C**
How is it that two barely top-10 cruisers got to headline on Showtime?						

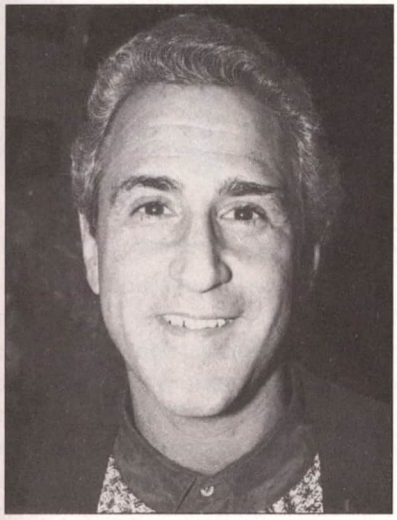
Category Explanation: "Significance"—The importance of the bout to the division and the fighters' futures; "Matchup"—The quality of the fighters and the prefight determination of how their styles will mesh; "Result"—How the bout turned out, from the viewer's perspective.

(World/Alphabet title fights in **bold** type)

Division key: h—heavyweight; c—cruiserweight; lh—light heavyweight; sm—super middleweight; m—middleweight; jm—junior middleweight; w—welterweight; jw—junior welterweight; l—lightweight; jl—junior lightweight; f—featherweight; jf—junior featherweight; b—bantamweight; jb—junior bantamweight; fl—flyweight; jfl—junior flyweight; s—strawweight

Network key: PPV—Pay-Per-View; Show—Showtime; FOXSN—Fox SportsNet; Uni—Univision; Telef—Telefutura; Telem—Telemundo; HBO L—HBO Latino

MITTLEMAN MIDDLEMAN IN FIX SCANDAL



Mittleman: in a fix

The same week it was revealed that members of the U.S. Armed Forces have been accused of torturing Iraqi prisoners of war, boxing had some of its own dirty laundry exposed when manager Robert Mittleman pleaded guilty to fixing fights and attempting to bribe a federal prosecutor and a judge to have a case against one of his boxers dismissed.

Mittleman, perhaps best known as one of Oscar De La Hoya's original co-managers, admitted arranging for heavyweight Thomas "Top Dawg" Williams to take dives against Brian Nielsen in March 2000 and Richie Melito in August of the same year. According to a plea memo unsealed by the court, Danish promoter Mogens Palle paid Williams $40,000 to throw the Nielsen fight, and U.S. promoter Robert Mitchell paid him $15,000 to fall down against Melito. Mittleman claimed that he received $1,000 for arranging each of the tank jobs.

Mittleman, 61, could get up to five years in prison for sports bribery and another 15 for attempting to bribe someone he believed to be a public servant, but who was actually an undercover officer. He also faces up to $500,000 in fines. It is, however, expected that Mittleman will testify against Williams and Mitchell at their trial in August, and that his cooperation will be taken into consideration when U.S. District Judge Robert C. Jones sentences him on July 26.

It is not the first time Mitchell has been accused of wrongdoing. In November '03, a Los Angeles Superior Court jury found that Mitchell had lied and misled Sugar Ray Leonard Boxing and breached a contract between the parties. The jury awarded SRL Boxing $443,315 in damages.

Melito, who hasn't fought since April 2001, has not been charged with a crime, while Palle and Nielsen are outside of the United States' legal jurisdiction.

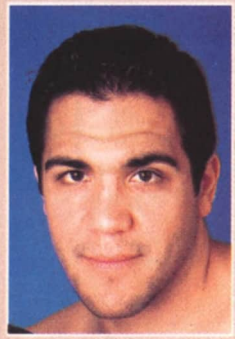
The fact that the Melito-Williams fight was being investigated by the Feds has been common knowledge within the boxing community for several years, but that hasn't stopped promoters in both the U.S. and Europe from using Williams' services. His last bout was in December '03, when he was stopped by Friday Ahunanya in Coconut Creek, Florida.

It is not known if any of the 33-year-old Williams' other fights were fixed. He turned pro in October '92 and won 15 of his first 16 bouts, but following a TKO defeat to Obed Sullivan in '95, he began to lose on a regular basis. Williams' record currently stands at 28-16 (19), with only three wins in his last 13 outings.

It also remains to be seen if the case against Mittleman will have any ramifications on the investigation into boxing that prompted the FBI to raid Top Rank's Las Vegas offices earlier this year. Until recently, Mittleman had maintained a close relationship with current and former Top Rank matchmakers. Former Top Rank matchmaker Sean Gibbons was fired the week following the raid. As documented in the May '04 issue of THE RING EXTRA, there have already been allegations that Top Rank promoted fixed fights featuring Butterbean, Jorge Paez, and Joey Torres.

—Nigel Collins

OUTSIDE THE ROPES



Mesi: Future in doubt

Heavyweight **Joe Mesi** can't deny that he narrowly escaped defeat against **Vassiliy Jirov** in March. But he is denying reports that he narrowly escaped something far worse than defeat that night. Mesi, along with his father/trainer **Jack Mesi**, refuted reports released by unnamed boxing officials that a postfight MRI revealed a blood clot on his brain. The Mesis insist that, in being floored three times in the last two rounds of the Jirov fight, "Baby Joe" merely suffered a concussion. As of press time, Mesi was on indefinite suspension in Nevada because of the way the fight ended, and his original postfight MRI (which was done in his native Buffalo, New York) will have to be submitted to the Nevada Athletic Commission for his ban to be lifted. Expect more developments in the saga of the undefeated heavyweight contender in the coming months ... Former bantamweight king **Tim Austin**, 33, was acquitted in mid-April of rape charges stemming from a May '03 encounter with a 16-year-old girl. A Hamilton County (Ohio) jury deliberated just 40 minutes before finding Austin not guilty, determining that there wasn't sufficient proof that the sex was nonconsensual ... Former welter champ **Vernon Forrest** will be out until at least July after having arthroscopic surgery in mid-April to repair bone chips and bone spurs in his left rotator cuff and elbow ... For a moment in mid-April it looked like world junior middleweight champion **Winky Wright** was signing a promotional contract with **Lou DiBella**, but it turned out that **Don King** won out and bagged Wright instead ... The Manhattan office of financially troubled promoter **Cedric Kushner** was destroyed in a fire in mid-April. No one was harmed, but Kushner's files and film library were reduced to ash ... He claims to be bankrupt, but that isn't stopping **Mike Tyson** from starting his own record label. Tyson told *The New York Times* in late-April that Tyson Records had already signed several rap acts and would be launching officially by early-summer ... Former Tyson trainer **Kevin Rooney** was sentenced in mid-April to eight months in an upstate New York jail for public drunkenness and probation violation. Rooney, 47, was on probation for a previous DWI charge ... Not only is he the Fighter of the Month *(see page 74)*, but heavyweight contender **Monte Barrett** is also a big winner on the game-show circuit. On an April taping of *The Price Is Right*, Barrett played the game "Pick Two Out Of Five" and won a two-week, all-expenses-paid trip to China ... Former IBF mini flyweight beltholder **Edgar Cardenas** announced his retirement in mid-April on the heels of being stopped in consecutive fights for the first time in his 13-year-career. The 29-year-old Mexican won the IBF title in May '03 with an upset kayo of **Miguel Barrera** and lost it less than five months later to **Daniel Reyes**. Cardenas' record stands at 30-12-2 (16) ... A few deaths of non-participants to report this issue: Australian promoter **Bill Mordey**, best known for working with **Jeff Fenech** and **Kostya Tszyu**, died in late-April at age 67 after having a negative reaction to chemotherapy; Indonesian promoter **Boy Bolang**, who also had a fine amateur career as a fighter, died in mid-April at age 56 following a stroke; and Texas manager **David Gorman**, best remembered for guiding the careers of **Donald Curry** and **Steve Cruz**, died of cancer in late-April at age 61.

Gorman: Manager dies at 61

THE PUNCHLINES

"I just need to find out which bank this key opens."

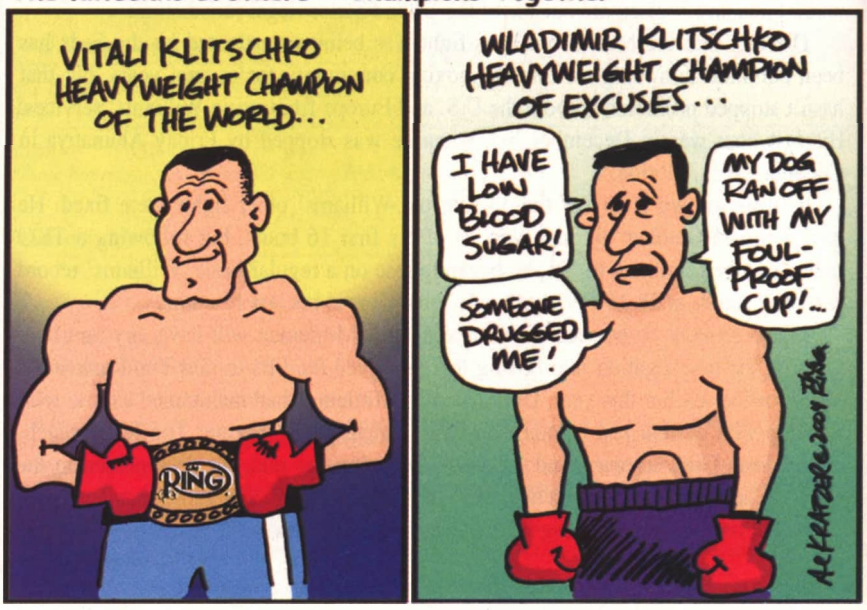
—Winky Wright, after being presented with a key to the city of St. Petersburg, Florida

"It's terrible, till I get back."

—James Toney, when asked for his opinion on the state of the heavyweight division

AL KRATZER'S VIEW

The Klitschko Brothers - Champions Together



"THE BIBLE OF BOXING"

RATINGS ANALYSIS

POUND-FOR-POUND

1. **ROY JONES**
   Heavyweight/Light heavyweight
2. **BERNARD HOPKINS**
   Middleweight
3. **FLOYD MAYWEATHER**
   Lightweight
4. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
   Junior Middleweight
5. **MANNY PACQUIAO**
   Featherweight
6. **WINKY WRIGHT**
   Junior Middleweight
7. **ERIK MORALES**
   Junior Lightweight
8. **KOSTYA TSZYU**
   Junior Welterweight
9. **JAMES TONEY**
   Heavyweight
10. **ANTONIO TARVER**
    Light Heavyweight

(For period ended May 5, 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS: Vitali Klitschko (first last issue) ascends to the champion's perch due to his TKO of Corrie Sanders (third last issue). Sanders, who announced his retirement a few days after the fight, exits. Also gone are Roy Jones (fourth last issue), who has dropped back down to light heavyweight, and Wladimir Klitschko (seventh last issue), who was knocked out by Lamon Brewster. Brewster debuts at number eight. John Ruiz (sixth last issue) advances to number two on the strength of his TKO of Fres Oquendo, who is currently seventh. Returning for the first time in several years is Andrew Golota, who rockets to sixth place by virtue of his draw with Chris Byrd, who took over the number-one spot when Klitschko won the title. Also returning, at the ninth slot, is Jameel McCline. The reorganization also boosts James Toney from fifth to third, Hasim Rahman from ninth to fourth, Monte Barrett from 10th to fifth, and makes room for Joe Mesi at number 10.

CRUISERWEIGHTS: Previously unranked Kelvin Davis debuts at number five due to his knockout of Ezra Sellers (fifth last issue). Sellers departs.

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS: No changes.

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Manny Siaca is number two after upsetting Anthony Mundine, who slips from second to third. Siaca's comeback pushes everybody rated below number two last issue down one spot each, which means that Mikkel Kessler (10th last issue) is gone.

MIDDLEWEIGHTS: Maselino Masoe crashes the rankings at number seven thanks to his kayo of Evans Ashira, who held that spot last issue. Ashira exits.

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS: No changes.

WELTERWEIGHTS: Ricardo Mayorga (number one last issue) is no longer campaigning as a welterweight. Mayorga's departure elevates Antonio Margarito (second last issue) to the number-one spot. Zab Judah (ranked second at junior welter last issue) is now number three at 147 pounds following his strong bid to take the title away from world champion Cory Spinks.

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS: Judah's switch to the welter division pushes everybody rated below him up one rung each, and makes room for Juan Valenzuela at number 10.

LIGHTWEIGHTS: Lakva Sim is new at number nine after stopping Miguel Callist, which shoves Juan Diaz down from ninth to 10th. Courtney Burton (10th last issue) is gone.

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS: No changes.

FEATHERWEIGHTS: In Jin Chi improves from sixth to fourth on the strength of his kayo of Michael Brodie, who falls from seventh to eighth. Chi's progress forces down Manuel Medina (fourth last issue) and Derrick Gainer (fifth last issue) to fifth and sixth, respectively. Brodie's demotion allows William Abelyan to move from eighth to seventh.

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS: Champion Paulie Ayala has abdicated to fight as a featherweight, which leaves the title vacant.

BANTAMWEIGHTS: Thanks to a technical-decision win over ninth-rated Ricardo Vargas, Heriberto Ruiz (eighth last issue) changes places with inactive Silence Mabuza (seventh last issue).

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS: No changes.

FLYWEIGHTS: No changes.

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS: Melchor Cob-Castro (sixth last issue) exits after being stopped by number-one ranked Jorge Arce, allowing everyone below him to move up one spot and making room for Hugo Cazares at number 10.

STRAWWEIGHTS: Roberto Leyva (ninth last issue) leaves after being kayoed by third-ranked Daniel Reyes. This allows Muhammad Rachman to advance from 10th to ninth, while Isaac Bustos comes aboard at number 10.

POUND-FOR-POUND: No changes. ■

THE RING RATINGS

For Period Ended May 5, 2004

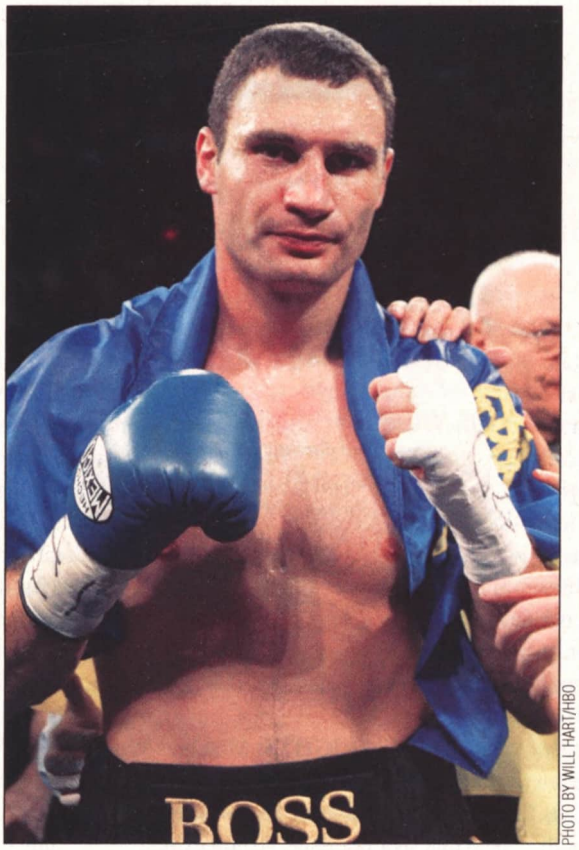


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Vitali Klitschko became the heavyweight champ by defeating Corrie Sanders

How Our Ratings Are Compiled

Fighters recognized as champions by THE RING are rated at the top of their division, with the top 10 contenders listed below.

Championship vacancies can be filled in one of two ways: by unifying all three alphabet titles in a division; or by winning a box-off between THE RING'S number-one and number-two contenders, or, in certain instances, a box-off between our number-one and number-three contenders.

The only three occasions when a fighter will lose his championship status are when he retires, moves to another weight division, or is defeated in a championship bout.

Ratings By The Editors

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Unlimited

Champ: VITALI KLITSCHKO
Ukraine 34-2 (33)

1. **CHRIS BYRD**
Flint, MI 37-2-1 (20)
2. **JOHN RUIZ**
Methuen, MA 40-5-1 (28)
3. **JAMES TONEY**
Ann Arbor, MI 67-4-2 (43)
4. **HASIM RAHMAN**
Baltimore, MD 37-5-1 (30)
5. **MONTE BARRETT**
Queens, NY 30-3 (16)
6. **ANDREW GOLOTA**
Poland 38-4-1 (31)
7. **FRES OQUENDO**
Puerto Rico 24-3 (15)
8. **LAMON BREWSTER**
Los Angeles, CA 30-2 (27)
9. **JAMEEL McCLINE**
Port Jefferson, NY 31-3-1 (19)
10. **JOE MESI**
Tonawanda, NY 29-0 (25)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 154 pounds

Champ: WINKY WRIGHT
St. Petersburg, FL 47-3 (25)

1. **OSCAR DE LA HOYA**
Los Angeles, CA 36-3 (29)
2. **SHANE MOSLEY**
Pomona, CA 39-3 (35)
3. **FERNANDO VARGAS**
Oxnard, CA 24-2 (22)
4. **KASSIM OUMA**
W. Palm Beach, FL 19-1-1 (13)
5. **VERNO PHILLIPS**
Aurora, CO 37-9-1 (19)
6. **JAVIER CASTILLEJO**
Spain 57-5 (39)
7. **DANIEL SANTOS**
Puerto Rico 28-2-1 (20)
8. **TRAVIS SIMMS**
Norwalk, CT 23-0 (18)
9. **J.C. CANDELO**
Colombia 27-6-3 (19)
10. **BRONCO McKART**
Monroe, MI 46-5 (30)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 126 pounds

Champ: MANNY PACQUIAO
Philippines 38-2-1 (29)

1. **JUAN MANUEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 42-2 (33)
2. **MARCO ANTONIO BARRERA**
Mexico 57-4 (40)
3. **SCOTT HARRISON**
Scotland 21-2-1 (11)
4. **INJIN CHI**
South Korea 28-2-1 (17)
5. **MANUEL MEDINA**
Mexico 62-14 (28)
6. **DERRICK GAINER**
Pensacola, FL 39-6-1 (24)
7. **WILLIAM ABELYAN**
Glendale, CA 23-4-1 (12)
8. **MICHAEL BRODIE**
England 35-2-1 (23)
9. **ROCKY JUAREZ**
Houston, TX 20-0 (14)
10. **ZAHIR RAHEEM**
Tulsa, OK 25-0 (15)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 122 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **OSCAR LARIOS**
Mexico 51-3-1 (35)
2. **ISRAEL VAZQUEZ**
Mexico 36-3 (27)
3. **MAHYAR MONSHIPOUR**
France 24-2-2 (15)
4. **JOAN GUZMAN**
Dominican Republic 21-0 (17)
5. **JOSE LUIS VALBUENA**
Venezuela 24-3-1 (14)
6. **SALIM MEDJKOUNE**
France 43-4-1 (21)
7. **OSAMU SATO**
Japan 27-2-3 (16)
8. **YODDAMRONG SITHYODTHONG**
Thailand 35-1-1 (19)
9. **NEDAL HUSSEIN**
Australia 32-1 (19)
10. **JORGE LACIERVA**
Mexico 24-5-4 (16)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 118 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **RAFAEL MARQUEZ**
Mexico 31-3 (28)
2. **VEERAPOL SAHAPROM**
Thailand 43-1-2 (30)
3. **CRUZ CARBAJAL**
Mexico 24-11-1 (20)
4. **JOHNNY BREDAHL**
Denmark 55-2 (26)
5. **GENARO GARCIA**
Mexico 30-4 (18)
6. **TOSHIAKI NISHIOKA**
Japan 23-4-3 (14)
7. **HERIBERTO RUIZ**
Mexico 30-2-2 (13)
8. **SILENCE MABUZA**
South Africa 15-0 (14)
9. **RICARDO VARGAS**
Mexico 36-10-3 (11)
10. **MAURICIO MARTINEZ**
Panama 24-5-1 (17)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 200 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **WAYNE BRAITHWAITE**
   Guyana 21-0 (17)
2. **JEAN-MARC MORMECK**
   France 29-2 (21)
3. **JOHNNY NELSON**
   England 43-12-2 (28)
4. **O'NEIL BELL**
   Atlanta, GA 22-1-1 (21)
5. **KELVIN DAVIS**
   Reno, NV 21-2-1 (16)
6. **CARL THOMPSON**
   England 32-6 (24)
7. **SEBASTIAN ROTHMAN**
   South Africa 17-2-2 (12)
8. **VIRGIL HILL**
   Bismarck, ND 49-4 (23)
9. **DALE BROWN**
   Canada 30-3-1 (20)
10. **PIETRO AURINO**
    Italy 28-2 (13)

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 175 pounds

Champ: ROY JONES
Pensacola, FL 49-1 (38)

1. **ANTONIO TARVER**
   Orlando, FL 21-2 (17)
2. **ZSOLT ERDEI**
   Hungary 19-0 (13)
3. **GLENCOFFE JOHNSON**
   Miami, FL 40-9-2 (27)
4. **JULIO GONZALEZ**
   Huntington Beach, CA 35-2 (22)
5. **DARIUSZ MICHALCZEWSKI**
   Germany 48-1 (38)
6. **ERIC HARDING**
   Philadelphia, PA 21-3-1 (7)
7. **CLINTON WOODS**
   England 35-3-1 (21)
8. **FABRICE TIOZZO**
   Franco 46-2 (30)
9. **SILVIO BRANCO**
   Italy 49-7-2 (30)
10. **RICHARD HALL**
    Winter Haven, FL 27-4 (25)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 168 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **JOE CALZAGHE**
   Wales 37-0 (30)
2. **MANNY SIACA**
   Puerto Rico 18-4 (16)
3. **ANTHONY MUNDINE**
   Australia 20-2 (15)
4. **ANTWUN ECHOLS**
   Davenport, IA 29-5-1 (26)
5. **DANNY GREEN**
   Australia 18-1 (17)
6. **BYRON MITCHELL**
   Ozark, AL 25-3-1 (18)
7. **MARKUS BEYER**
   Germany 29-1 (11)
8. **CHARLES BREWER**
   Philadelphia, PA 40-9 (28)
9. **MADS LARSEN**
   Denmark 45-2 (37)
10. **ROBIN REID**
    England 36-4-1 (27)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 160 pounds

Champ: BERNARD HOPKINS
Philadelphia, PA 43-2-1 (31)

1. **HOWARD EASTMAN**
   England 39-1 (35)
2. **ROBERT ALLEN**
   Atlanta, GA 36-4 (27)
3. **RODNEY JONES**
   Lafayette, LA 32-3 (21)
4. **WILLIAM JOPPY**
   Washington, D.C. 34-3-1 (25)
5. **JERMAIN TAYLOR**
   Little Rock, AR 20-0 (15)
6. **SERGEY TATEVOSYAN**
   Russia 19-4 (13)
7. **MASELINO MASOE**
   New Zealand 26-2 (25)
8. **FELIX STURM**
   Germany 20-0 (9)
9. **KINGSLEY IKEKE**
   Canada 19-1 (10)
10. **RAYMOND JOVAL**
    Netherlands 32-2 (14)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 147 pounds

Champ: CORY SPINKS
St. Louis, MO 33-2 (11)

1. **ANTONIO MARGARITO**
   Mexico 30-3 (21)
2. **VERNON FORREST**
   Atlanta, GA 35-2 (26)
3. **ZAB JUDAH**
   Brooklyn, NY 30-2 (22)
4. **THOMAS DAMGAARD**
   Denmark 34-0 (26)
5. **MICHELE PICCIRILLO**
   Italy 41-2 (25)
6. **MANUEL GOMEZ**
   Mexico 25-10-1 (18)
7. **TEDDY REID**
   Adelphi, MD 22-5-1 (16)
8. **JAWAID KHALIQ**
   England 23-1-1 (13)
9. **JOSE RIVERA**
   Worcester, MA 37-3-1 (24)
10. **CARLOS BALDOMIR**
    Argentina 40-9-6 (12)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 140 pounds

Champ: KOSTYA TSZYU
Australia 30-1 (24)

1. **SHARMBA MITCHELL**
   Washington, D.C. 54-3 (30)
2. **ARTURO GATTI**
   Jersey City, NJ 37-6 (28)
3. **VIVIAN HARRIS**
   Brooklyn, NY 24-1-1 (16)
4. **RICKY HATTON**
   England 35-0 (26)
5. **DeMARCUS CORLEY**
   Washington, D.C. 28-2-1 (16)
6. **OKTAY URKAL**
   Germany 34-2 (10)
7. **LOVEMORE NDOU**
   Australia 38-6-1 (24)
8. **MIGUEL COTTO**
   Puerto Rico 19-0 (16)
9. **JUNIOR WITTER**
   England 28-1-2 (17)
10. **JUAN VALENZUELA**
    Mexico 20-6 (9)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 135 pounds

Champ: FLOYD MAYWEATHER
Grand Rapids, MI 31-0 (21)

1. **JUAN LAZCANO**
   El Paso, TX 33-2-1 (25)
2. **JOSE LUIS CASTILLO**
   Mexico 49-6-1 (45)
3. **STEVE JOHNSTON**
   Denver, CO 35-3-1 (17)
4. **ACELINO FREITAS**
   Brazil 35-0 (31)
5. **JAVIER JAUREGUI**
   Mexico 47-10-2 (34)
6. **JULIO DIAZ**
   Coachella, CA 29-2 (22)
7. **ARTUR GRIGORIAN**
   Uzbekistan 36-1 (22)
8. **JULIEN LORCY**
   France 56-3-2 (41)
9. **LAKVA SIM**
   Mongolia 19-3-1 (16)
10. **JUAN DIAZ**
    Houston, TX 24-0 (12)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 130 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **DIEGO CORRALES**
   Sacramento, CA 38-2 (31)
2. **JOEL CASAMAYOR**
   Miami, FL 30-2 (19)
3. **ERIK MORALES**
   Mexico 46-1 (34)
4. **JESUS CHAVEZ**
   Mexico 40-3 (28)
5. **CARLOS HERNANDEZ**
   Bellflower, CA 40-3-1 (24)
6. **STEVE FORBES**
   Las Vegas, NV 23-2 (6)
7. **YODSANAN NANTHACHAI**
   Thailand 42-2-1 (35)
8. **JORGE BARRIOS**
   Argentina 41-2-1 (29)
9. **ORLANDO SALIDO**
   Mexico 20-8-1 (13)
10. **CASSIUS BALOYI**
    South Africa 29-1 (16)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 115 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **MASAMORI TOKUYAMA**
   North Korea 30-2-1 (8)
2. **MARK JOHNSON**
   Washington, D.C. 43-3 (28)
3. **ALEXANDER MUNOZ**
   Venezuela 25-0 (24)
4. **LUIS PEREZ**
   Nicaragua 22-1 (14)
5. **FERNANDO MONTIEL**
   Mexico 28-1-1 (22)
6. **MARTIN CASTILLO**
   Mexico 25-1 (15)
7. **FELIX MACHADO**
   Venezuela 22-5-1 (11)
8. **MAURICIO PASTRANA**
   Colombia 31-4-1 (21)
9. **JOSE NAVARRO**
   Los Angeles, CA 20-0 (8)
10. **ERIC MOREL**
    Madison, WI 34-1 (18)

FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 112 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **PONGSAKLEK WONJONGKAM**
   Thailand 51-2 (27)
2. **LORENZO PARRA**
   Venezuela 22-0 (17)
3. **IRENE PACHECO**
   Colombia 28-0 (21)
4. **MZUKISI SIKALI**
   South Africa 28-4-2 (17)
5. **OMAR NARVAEZ**
   Argentina 16-0-2 (10)
6. **VIC DARCHINYAN**
   Australia 21-0 (16)
7. **BRAHIM ASLOUM**
   France 15-0 (6)
8. **HUSSEIN HUSSEIN**
   Australia 25-1 (19)
9. **LUIS MALDONADO**
   Mexico 28-0 (20)
10. **TAKEFUMI SAKATA**
    Japan 22-1-1 (9)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 108 pounds

Champ: ROSENDO ALVAREZ
Nicaragua 32-2-2 (21)

1. **JORGE ARCE**
   Mexico 36-3-1 (27)
2. **BEIBIS MENDOZA**
   Colombia 29-2 (23)
3. **VICTOR BURGOS**
   Mexico 36-13-3 (21)
4. **NELSON DIEPPA**
   Puerto Rico 20-2-2 (12)
5. **PICHIT SIRIWAT**
   Thailand 28-2 (13)
6. **FAHLAN SAKKREERIN**
   Thailand 50-3-2 (20)
7. **KERMIN GUARDIA**
   Colombia 35-3 (21)
8. **ULISES SOLIS**
   Mexico 13-0 (9)
9. **ROBERTO VASQUEZ**
   Panama 15-1 (13)
10. **HUGO CAZARES**
    Mexico 18-3-1 (14)

STRAWWEIGHTS
Weight Limit: 105 pounds

Champ: Vacant

1. **NOEL ARAMBULET**
   Venezuela 20-2-1 (10)
2. **EAGLE AKAKURA**
   Japan 12-0 (5)
3. **DANIEL REYES**
   Colombia 34-1-1 (29)
4. **JOSE AGUIRRE**
   Mexico 30-2-1 (19)
5. **YUTAKA NIIDA**
   Japan 15-1-3 (8)
6. **IVAN CALDERON**
   Puerto Rico 19-0 (3)
7. **JUAN LANDAETA**
   Venezuela 15-2 (13)
8. **CHANA PORPAOIN**
   Thailand 50-2-2 (17)
9. **MUHAMMAD RACHMAN**
   Indonesia 48-7-3 (21)
10. **ISAAC BUSTOS**
    Mexico 22-6-3 (11)

RYAN OUT LOUD

By Jeff Ryan

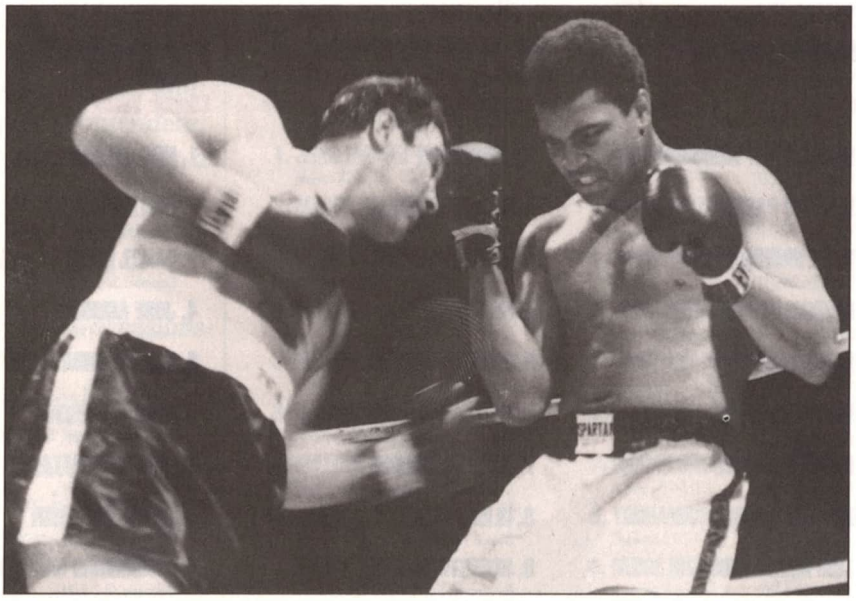
CAN WE GET ANYONE TOUPEE FOR THIS?

Though some of boxing's younger fans might not be aware of it, the computer played a role in the fight game decades before the arrival of such things as CompuBox, oscardelahoya.com, and those Internet chat rooms that enable jab junkies from different time zones to debate the merits of Lovemore Ndou's IBF rating. That's right, 35 years ago, a Florida businessman named Murray Woroner brought to fruition his seemingly nutty idea of matching undefeated heavyweight champions Rocky Marciano and Muhammad Ali in a computer superfight.

In those days, there were no such things as virtual reality and lifelike graphics. To create the visuals, the two legends had to actually square off in a ring. So the 45-year-old "Brockton Blockbuster," who'd been retired for 14 years at the time, and the 27-year-old "Louisville Lip," who was in the midst of a 3½-year exile and still more than a year away from his comeback bout against Jerry Quarry, sparred more than 75 one-minute rounds for the cameras in a Miami warehouse in the summer of 1969.

In a desperate attempt to look like something other than the flabby, balding, middle-aged ex-jock that he was, "The Rock" lost 50 pounds and donned a toupee. There was no crowd surrounding the ring, just a hazy, dark background that made an already bizarre exercise seem even more surreal. The fighters threw a combination of pulled punches, shots that were launched in slow motion and later speeded up to look real, and some blows that actually landed with more force than was intended (to which the welts on Ali's ribcage and the punch that lifted Marciano's hairpiece off his head attested).

Various outcomes were filmed, the champions' strengths and weaknesses were allegedly fed into a computer, and on the night of January 20, 1970, the battle unfolded for theater audiences. Marciano won via TKO, leading Ali, who was watching in a Philadelphia cinema, to declare that the computer must have been manufactured in Alabama. Sadly, Marciano never saw the finished product, having been killed in a plane crash shortly after filming was completed.



Bewigged Marciano rips into Ali in 1970 computer fight

The Marciano-Ali computer bout may have been nothing more than visual junk food, but it sure was fun to stuff ourselves with it for one night. And in this age of ESPN Classic and throwback jerseys, wouldn't it be neat to glue on the hairpieces, suck in the guts, rent an airplane hangar, and film something like that again? You bet.

Hey, there are enough old-timers still breathing without the aid of a respirator to make it work. The fun part (though probably not

for the tailors who'd have to let out the waistbands of some retirees' trunks) would be getting the superstars to dust off their weapons of mass destruction while running through more choreographed moves than Britney Spears on her world tour.

To give the telecast a 1960s feel, we'll hire football great Jim Brown (no stranger to boxing broadcasts in the past, despite his inability to provide any kind of insight) as an analyst. And we'll show the card only on closed-circuit television. Sure, the picture will be washed-out and the sound will be muffled. Those are small prices to pay, however, for the thrill of watching …

•**Bernard Hopkins vs. Marvin Hagler:** Staged fight or not, the ferocious Philadelphian can stoke his rival's fire by stomping on the flag of Hagler's adopted homeland, Italy, and downplaying Marvelous' accomplishments by calling him the Frank Fletcher of fagioli. Hagler can be expected to bleed movie blood at some point and trash talk in Italian. Endings filmed: Hagler finishes Hopkins with a straight left in round 12, Hopkins counterpunches masterfully in the final 30 seconds to clinch the decision, and Hagler is disqualified for outside interference when his paisan, former middleweight king Nino Benvenuti, jumps up on the ring apron and clobbers Hopkins from behind.

•**George Foreman I vs. George Foreman II:** Recreating Big George I might require the most extensive makeup job this side of Kiss. There won't be any fancy computer images here, just the same old-fashioned, cheesy camera tricks employed when "identical cousins" Patty and Cathy Lane occupied the screen together on *The Patty Duke Show*. Endings filmed: Foreman I blows out Foreman II in one round, Foreman II drops face-first from exhaustion in the 11th and doesn't rise for five minutes, and George Foreman III joins Lamps and Brown at ringside and his commentary is so absurd and annoying that Foremen I and II beat him senseless during the postfight interview.

•**Roy Jones vs. Michael Spinks:** In the event that this fight falls through, Larry Holmes-John Ruiz will take its place. (You're right. That wasn't the least bit funny. My apologies.) Endings filmed: "The Spinks Jinx" drops Jones three times for an automatic stoppage in round seven, Jones ekes out a split decision after 12 spirited rounds, and Jones backpedals his way to a unanimous decision win without throwing a punch, thus confirming suspicions that the computer was made in Pensacola.

•**Floyd Mayweather vs. Pernell Whitaker:** If "Pretty Boy" Floyd doesn't do a better job of staying out of trouble, by the time this one unfolds it might be billed as Inmate 43567 vs. Inmate 87961: "Slugfest In The Slammer." It could be the most eagerly anticipated prison contest since the football game in *The Longest Yard*. Endings filmed: Whitaker captures a boring decision, Mayweather captures a boring decision, and both fighters are disqualified when referee Joe Cortez discovers shanks hidden in the pockets of their robes.

•**Evander Holyfield vs. Joe Frazier:** "The Real Deal" still gives the appearance of being in his prime—as long as he's not speaking or trying to do anything at full-speed. "Smokin' Joe," on the other hand, has so many grays in his beard that he looks like Kenny Rogers after too many trips to the tanning salon. Does Just For Men come in six-packs? Endings filmed: Holyfield smiles confidently as a winded Frazier walks straight into another final-round flurry, Frazier's crunching left hook makes the 15th round bomb landed against Ali at the Garden look like a love tap and it puts Holyfield down for the count, and the shootout is cut short by the arrival of Son of Fan Man, who crashes an 18-wheeler through the wall of the hangar and stops just short of the ring.

Oscar vs. Sugar Ray: No toupees required

•**Arturo Gatti vs. Vinny Paz:** Toupees wouldn't be required, but the two warriors would have to glue mini hairpieces onto their scar tissue to give the appearance that they still have eyebrows. True, a "Pazmanian Devil" bout without a crowd would be like a riot without an unruly mob, but surrealism is what we're after here. Endings filmed: Gatti knocks the devil out of Paz with a sizzling left hook in round three, Paz darts and dances his way to an easy victory, and the mere introduction of ringsider Razor Ruddock causes both fighters to bleed profusely and the bout is declared a technical draw.

•**De La Hoya vs. Sugar Ray Leonard:** The All-American Boy vs. The All-American Boy. Las Vegas sports books could take bets on which fighter spent more time in front of the makeup mirror backstage. The aforementioned airplane hangar would be the perfect setting because it might be the only building big enough to contain both stars' egos. Endings filmed: De La Hoya sags through the ropes from a barrage of Leonard bombs, "The Golden Boy's" left hook drops His Sweetness to assure a unanimous verdict, and the bout is declared no contest when it's revealed that De La Hoya, who promotes Leonard, and Leonard, who promotes De La Hoya, both tried to throw the fight to set up a lucrative computer rematch. ■

DIGGING DEEP

By Ivan Goldman

SCARED STIFF BY LENNOX LEWIS

If heavyweight champions were rated by how other heavyweights felt about them, the retired Lennox Lewis would rank much higher than where most fans and boxing historians will place him. In a line of work where enormous courage is standard, Lewis scared guys stiff. In many cases, their reactions were downright bizarre.

Two men—Oliver McCall in the rematch and also Andrew Golota—suffered what could be described as nervous breakdowns in the ring with Lewis. Henry Akinwande was so panicked he held on to him as though Lewis were the last teddy bear in the world. Finally, referee Mills Lane disqualified the terrified challenger for irrational, excessive holding.

Rather than face mandatory challenger Lewis, Riddick Bowe threw his WBC belt into a trashcan. Bowe claimed it was a business matter. Possibly. But he'd lost to Lewis in the 1988 Olympics. Lewis, fighting for Canada, won gold. The memory may have significantly affected Bowe's trashcan decision.

PHOTO BY GIULIO MARCOCCHI/GETTY IMAGES

Lewis: The best big man since Holmes

David Tua, another tough hombre, also fought a panicked, screwy fight against Lewis. After tasting the champion's right hand early, Tua stayed practically on the other side of the ring, but kept bobbing and weaving anyway, just in case Lewis managed to throw a punch from 10 feet away.

Supposedly invincible Mike Tyson once paid $4-million, possibly more, to Lewis to drop his mandatory challenge and let Tyson fight Bruce Seldon instead. Six years later, when his handlers finally pushed Tyson into a contest with Lewis, Tyson charged him at a New York press conference. Starting a brawl he knew would be broken up immediately, Tyson wasn't showing courage. It looked more like a desperate attempt to duck out of a 12-round fight. Lewis calmly stood his ground and slugged him. Though Tyson bared his trusty old choppers and bit Lewis on the leg, he never got around to eating his children.

Eventually, when Tyson had to fight Lewis anyway, the great intimidator suffered the worst beating of his life. After getting stopped in round eight, he looked like he'd been dragged down the highway by an 18-wheeler. Afterward, Tyson, talking like a victim of the Stockholm syndrome, couldn't say enough nice things about how Lewis had taken him apart.

But fans had good reasons not to be wild about Lewis. He was too cautious in the ring. Unless it got personal, as it did with Tyson, too often Lewis was content to stay back, rely on his jab, and bore the crowd. Only infrequently did he pour on the hurt the way a champion should.

Contrast that with the undefeated little Rocky Marciano. Owning the consistent work ethic Lewis lacked, ferocious Rocky wouldn't settle for just defeating his opponents. He was out to destroy them.

When Lewis fought Michael Grant, I watched at a bar in Hermosa Beach, California. The owner, a friend of mine, charged 10 bucks at the door for the pay-per-screwed telecast. That night, in a place that Mike Tyson, Oscar De La Hoya, and Evander Holyfield had packed repeatedly, employees may have outnumbered paying customers. It seemed Lewis had only a few more fans than there are hairs on Holyfield's shaved weapon-head.

Across the pond in Britain, Jamaican-Canadian-English Lewis failed to equal even the infinitely less talented Frank Bruno in terms of popularity.

But Lewis didn't get enough credit for his admirable qualities. For instance, he was not one to hide behind ridiculous mandatories dictated by corrupt alphabet gangs. In 2000, rather than defend his WBA belt against John Ruiz, a boring fringe contender promoted by Don King, Lewis gave up his belt. Instead he fought Grant, believed to be a much tougher test, and knocked him out in two rounds.

Lewis deserves special mention for being such a headache to King, who controlled the heavyweight division for much of the last two decades. The two had a history of quarrels in and out of court. In March 1999, when Lewis easily bested Holyfield, who was then promoted by King, he had to settle for a draw thanks to scoring so divorced from reality that it's downright historic. Judge Eugenia Williams gained fame for her despicable 115-113 nod to the bested Holyfield. Williams, licensed by the New Jersey commission, still wields an official scoring pencil at cards, including King-promoted cards. This is not comforting.

From time to time, Lewis cut corners in training, which led to both of his losses. But even out of shape in his last fight, Lewis, behind on all three cards, managed to slice the left side of Vitali Klitschko's head into raw sirloin. The champion deserved his victory, achieved fair and square by sixth-round stoppage.

At the end of his career, Lewis, though he loved being heavyweight champion of the world, couldn't summon the will to climb that preparation mountain one more time and face Klitschko again. Stepping down at age 38 with a record of 41-2-1 (32) was a wise choice. There's always another challenger standing on top of another mountain thumping his chest. But eventually, even a champion has to stop climbing mountains.

Sure, Lewis was flawed. He was also the best big man since Larry Holmes—and ultimately more durable than Tyson, Bowe, or Holyfield. It may be many years before we see another heavyweight the caliber of Lennox Lewis.

NEW FIGHT FLICK: Hollywood publicist Jeff Freedman tells me Clint Eastwood plans to produce, direct, and star in a film called *Million Dollar Baby*. Eastwood will play an ex-fighter running an L.A. gym with partner Morgan Freeman when in walks sexy Hilary Swank. She plays "a young woman who's determined," Freedman says, "to become a boxer."

Hmm, gorgeous chick overcomes objections of crusty trainer who then molds her into a champion. Face it; material for another *Raging Bull* or *Body And Soul* this is not. For years, Eastwood has alternated brilliant work such as *Unforgiven* with forgettable dreck like *The Gauntlet*. This project sounds closer to the second category. But Eastwood and Freeman have so much talent they might be able to overcome all that cliched material. And Swank getting sweaty? That's hot.

PHOTO BY MARK W. HILL

Mosley: Ethical man who deserves respect

Speaking of Hollywood … after I saw Meg Ryan play the part of real-life boxing manager Jackie Kallen in *Against The Ropes*, I put in a call to Brad Pitt's agent to see if Pitt would be willing to star in the life story of boxing writer Ivan Goldman. If Hollywood expects us to pretend Kallen and beautiful Ryan are look-alikes, why not Goldman and Pitt?

Although Brad's agent was busy doing other important Hollywood things when I called, I know he'll get back to me. His taped greeting said my call was very important to him. Meanwhile, I'll start putting together the screenplay. Let's see—it all started on a dark and stormy night …

NO LIE: Shane Mosley passed a polygraph in which he denied taking steroids for his second Oscar De La Hoya match. Everyone who voiced a suspicion of funny business should allocate some attention to the innocence of this ethical, decent man.

ON SCHEDULE: Marty Mulcahey's up-to-the-minute, online rundown of future fights can now be found at Maxboxing.com. If you want to know who's fighting who, when, and where, it's a great place to look. The schedule uses THE RING's ratings, designates our champions, and points out which fights have our belts at stake.

THE GOLDEN LANDLORD: California matchmaker Jerry Bilderrain says De La Hoya has been buying so much property around Southern California that they ought to call him Oscar De La Renta. ■

HAMMERSTEIN BALLROOM

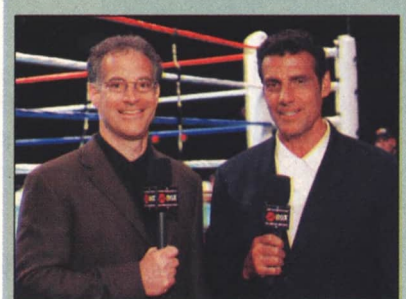
IF YOU GO

Location: 311 West 34th Street, between 8th and 9th Avenues, New York, NY 10001 (within walking distance of both Grand Central and Penn Stations); phone: 212-279-7740; Web address: www.mcstudios.com

Hours of operation: Although doors usually open at 6 p.m. for boxing shows that begin at 7 p.m., it is advised that you call ahead for confirmation.

Who to look out for: Just about every show brings a veritable who's who of past and present boxing luminaries. Among those present for the April show, which was the first unionized card ever, were Teamsters President James Hoffa Jr. and such local boxing figures as Teddy Atlas, LeRoy Neiman, Lou Duva, Monte Barrett, Zab Judah, Vito Antuofermo, and Lou Savarese.

Advice to greenhorns: The Hammerstein is a truly friendly environment and most boxers are more than happy to greet their fans between fights. However, there are usually scores of serious fans in attendance that don't appreciate their sightlines being blocked by autograph seekers. There is plenty of time to get autographs during intermissions without being inconsiderate toward other fans.



ShoBox ***broadcasters Steve Farhood and Nick Charles***

The Hammerstein is a small, intimate venue with great sightlines

Text by Robert Mladinich
Photos by Tom Casino

When Cedric Kushner, who was in the music business long before he was in the boxing business, began utilizing midtown Manhattan's Hammerstein Ballroom for his *Heavyweight Explosion* boxing series several years ago, he never could have imagined what a trendsetter he'd be. Since then, numerous other promoters, including Bob Arum, Lou DiBella, Art Dore, and even the New York Police Department's Fighting Finest boxing team, have staged events there with much success.

"This is an old cliche, but there is literally not a bad seat in the house," said Kushner. "The venue has been used for lots of things over the years, but it is perfect for boxing."

The Hammerstein is located within a large building called the Manhattan Center. Built in 1906, it houses a number of television and recording studios, ballrooms, and conference centers. As a boxing venue, the Hammerstein is as simple as it is glorious. The baroque ceilings are complemented by three tiers of balcony seating, giving the impression of an intimate old off-Broadway showplace or opera house.

No one can dispute the fact that the ballroom is New York through and through. This is reflected in its boxing fan base, an eclectic bunch ranging from construction workers, many of whom often come straight from work, to corporate suits and even the Reverend Al

McCline whacks out Wayne Llewellyn on recent Hammerstein card

Sharpton. It is also reflected in the sponsors, many of which are local labor unions whose banners are festooned throughout the arena, and the fighters themselves. Participating in an April show were a multi-ethnic conglomeration of boxers of American, African, Hispanic, Israeli, British, Serbian, and Swedish heritage. Not surprisingly, each and every one of them had a large and very vocal group of supporters in attendance.

Because that show was televised on *ShoBox*, and also occurred on the eve of the Boxing Writers Association of America's annual awards dinner, journalists from around the country descended on the Hammerstein, many for the first time, to see heavyweight contenders Jeremy Williams and Jameel McCline emerge victorious in separate bouts. The buzz at ringside was that it was a very special place.

"It's a great venue, with a real old-fashioned feel to it," summed up Tim Smith, who covers boxing for the New York *Daily News*. "No matter where you sit, you're right on top of the action. The intimacy of the place lends itself to excitement. Because the noise is so amplified, people get caught up in the excitement, even if the action in the ring isn't all that exciting. It's like a cleaner, brighter version of the Blue Horizon. The difference is, you can actually watch a fight here without worrying about a rat running across your feet." ■

Boxing isn't the only attraction

The Hammerstein is part of the Manhattan Center

Between-bout refreshments are available

Corporate and union sponsorship help pay the bills

CAMERA CLICKS

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

James Toney won big at the Boxing Writers Association of America awards dinner in April, taking home trophies for Fighter of the Year and Fight of the Year, so he decided to share the wealth and let fellow heavyweight contender Monte Barrett hold one of his statuettes. Although, knowing Toney, he probably only let Barrett hold the thing so he could claim Monte stole it and have a good excuse for kicking his ass.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Ever since that whole Monica Lewinski thing, women haven't been able to get enough of cigars. At a recent fight card in Miami, these two round-card girls puffed away, proving that there's nothing wrong with a little smoke in the boxing arena—unless the "Smoke" in question goes by the last name Gainer.

PHOTO BY PEARCI BASTIANY

We don't want to call Mike Tyson a coward, but doesn't it look an awful lot like he's hiding behind a 62-year-old man with Parkinson's? Tyson and Muhammad Ali, two of the most popular heavyweight champs of all-time, were recently spotted together at a K-1 martial arts event. Anyone else think Tyson might just be the more washed-up fighter of the two at the present time?

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

Hey, Colonel Bob, watch where that hand wanders! At the BWAA awards dinner, veteran commentator Colonel Bob Sheridan (and an attractive friend) presented Bernardo Osuna with the Sam Taub Award for excellence in broadcast journalism, making Osuna, who works for Telefutura, the first Spanish-language recipient of the award.

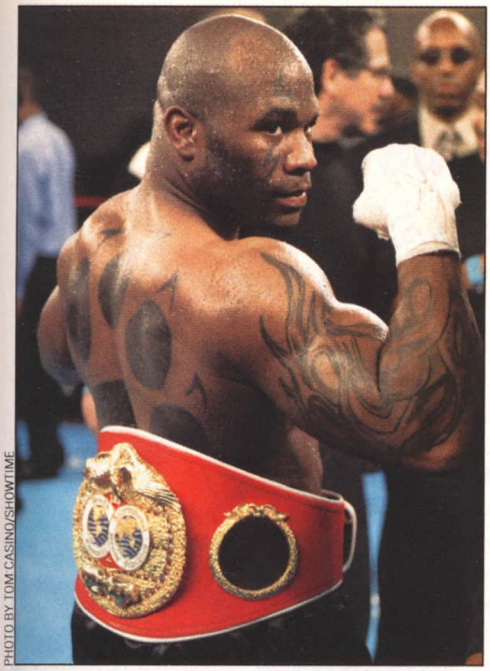


PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

We guess he won't be selling any goldenpalace.com advertisements. Cruiserweight beltholder Kelvin Davis is just about as covered in tattoos as he could be, unless he wants to start going to work on the top of his shaved head. One piece of advice, though, Kelvin: Try turning the belt around.

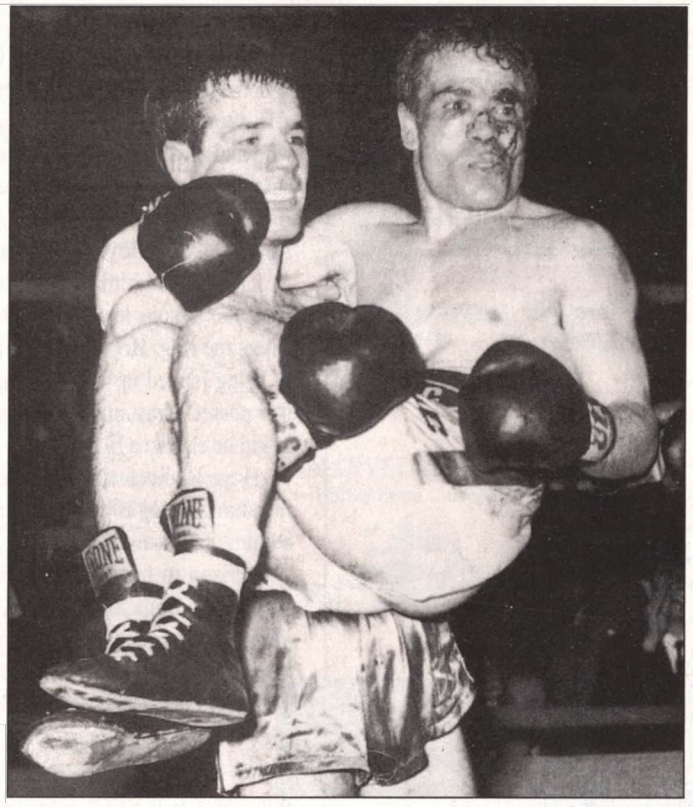
PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

At the BWAA dinner, journalist Tony Paige and referee Frank Cappuccino sounded the ceremonial 10-count for everyone in the fight game who passed away in 2003. Let's just hope that next year, when the dinner takes place in Las Vegas for the first time, they don't let Jay Nady ring the bell, or we might end up with the salute being called off at the count of four.

PHOTO BY MIKE GREENHILL

THE RING Managing Editor Eric Raskin demonstrates how not to pose for pictures, as he looks away from the camera, tucks his award under his arm where you can't see it, and fiddles with his tie in front of a room full of people. At least he writes better than he poses; Raskin won first prize in the "Event Coverage" category in the BWAA writing awards. Also honored that evening were regular RING writers Bernard Fernandez and David Mayo, and photographers Al Bello, Tom Casino, Chris Farina, and Will Hart.

NOSTALGIA CORNER



Is this what they mean by carrying your opponent? After dropping a decision to Salvatore Burruni for the European flyweight title in April 1964, Walter McGowan displayed tremendous sportsmanship, lifting his conqueror in his arms. And McGowan's sportsmanship would be rewarded two years later, when he would go on to defeat Burruni via decision for the world title.

NEW FACES

RICO HOYE

Light Heavyweight

By Joe Santoliquito

PRO RECORD

2001		
June 20	Omar Pucci, Warren, MI	KO 3
Aug. 10	Percel Banks, Detroit, MI	KO 3
Nov. 23	Marris Virgil, Detroit	KO 2
Dec. 21	Vidal Middlebrook, Youngstown, OH	KO 1
2002		
Jan. 22	Conley Person, Detroit	KO 1
Jan. 31	Kenny Snow, Detroit	W 6
April 19	Ruben Ruiz, Auburn Hills, MI	KO 2
June 8	George Klinesmith, Memphis, TN	KO 2
Sept. 27	Greg Wright, Auburn Hills	W 8
Nov. 2	Ayodeji Fadeyi, Auburn Hills	KO 1
2003		
Jan. 29	Segundo Mercado, Warren	KO 1
April 24	Tyrone Muex, Gulfport, MS	KO 3
June 5	Prince Badi Ajamu, Detroit	W 12
Oct. 11	Etienne Whitaker, Auburn Hills	KO 2
Dec. 12	Marris Virgil, Dearborn, MI	KO 1
2004		
March 18	Donnell Wiggins, Santa Ynez, CA	KO 1

FIGHTS	WON	LOST	DRAW	KOs
16	16	0	0	13

Walking around with a gun in his pocket was supposed to be cool and make him look hard, or so Rico Hoye once thought. It enabled him to survive the street game, gave him the false sense of security that he would be able to repel anything that came at him.

That changed one night when Hoye made the fatal mistake of shooting that gun and killing someone. Cool and hard suddenly turned into prison overalls with an orange stripe, shuffling along in chains to his cell.

Hoye served nine years in the Michigan prison system for second-degree murder. He was a 16-year-old kid when he was imprisoned, a kid who had previously thought that he had all of the answers. From the time he was incarcerated, on June 5, 1991, to the time he was released, on April 30, 2000, Hoye learned otherwise.

The wicked-hitting, 6'3" light heavyweight takes the lessons learned with him every time he enters the ring. Hoye, 16-0 (13), carries the scars of being locked up when his father and grandfather passed away, and of ending the life of another kid he shot in a fit of rage.

Hoye is undefeated in part because what he's faced in the ring is nothing compared to what he endured in prison.

"Prison to me, especially in Michigan, was like psychological warfare," recalled the 29-year-old. "If you stand up for yourself, and show anyone that you will fight, nine times out of 10 you won't be messed with. That's why I'm willing to go-all out every time I'm in the ring. They're going to have to kill me to beat me. I don't care if it's Roy Jones or Antonio Tarver, because I stood in front of guys who make Saddam Hussein look like a saint."

Hoye grew up in Monroe, Michigan, raised by his grandfather, Robert Hoye Sr., who had boxed in his youth. Rico's father, Bobby Rico Hoye, had fought also. Rico was being groomed to follow the same path, but was being turned off by the strong shove toward the ring he was receiving from his grandfather.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Hoye's teenage life was a steady dose of school, boxing, and discipline—not necessarily in that order. Boxing was dinner talk. While other 16- and 17-year-olds were hanging out at the mall and going to the movies, Hoye was in bed, resting to train the next day.

On cold, 20-degree Michigan mornings, it was easy to find Hoye trotting in the dusk, buried under 30 pounds of clothes that included a big hunter's snowsuit and work boots.

"I was getting burned out," Hoye said.

(Continued on page 85)

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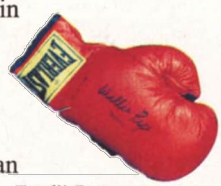

★ Earnie Shavers
★ Carmen Basilio
★ Leon Spinks
★ Michael Spinks
★ Aaron Pryor
★ Christy Martin
★ Willie Pep
★ Ken Norton
★ Virgil Hill
★ Kid Gavilan
★ Ken Buchanan
★ Danny "Little Red" Lopez
★ Angel Manfredy
★ Terry Norris
★ Jeff Fenech
★ Pipino Cuevas
★ Nino Benvenuti
★ "Irish" Micky Ward
★ Paulie Ayala
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★ Tommy Morrison
★ Angelo Dundee

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★ Michael & Leon Spinks
★ Basilio - DeMarco
★ Benvenuti - Griffith

COMBINATION GLOVE

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EVERLAST CORNER POST

$275

Autographed by 26 greats:

Barkley ★ Basilio ★ Bramble ★ Bruno ★ Buchanan ★ Cokes ★ Cuevas ★ Curry ★ Ellis ★ Foreman ★ Fullmer ★ Griffith ★ Hagler ★ Lopez, R. ★ McCallum ★ Norris ★ Norton ★ Olivares ★ Ortiz ★ Pryor ★ Saad Muhammad ★ Shavers ★ Spinks, L. ★ Starling ★ Stracey ★ Torres ★

BOXING ROBE

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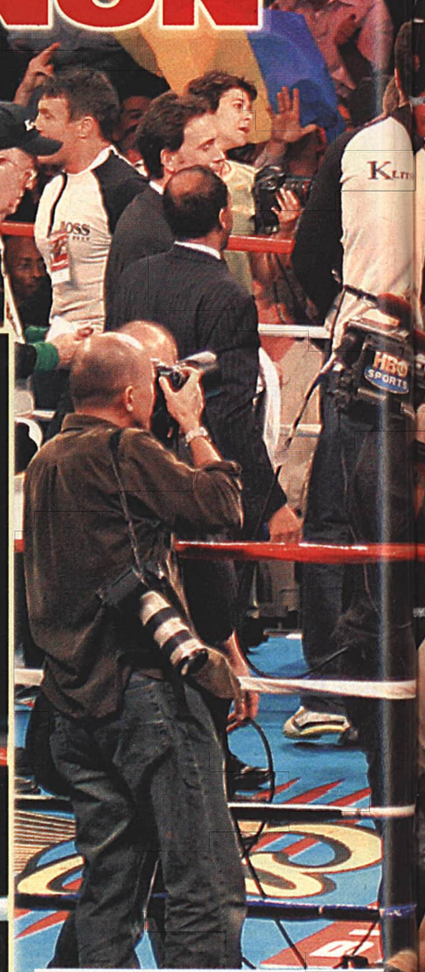
THE VITALI KLITSCHKO PHENOMENON

How Did A Ukraine-Born, Germany-Bred Fighter Become An American Hero?

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO



With his eighth-round stoppage victory over Corrie Sanders (left), Klitschko delighted the 17,000-plus fans at the Staples Center and claimed the vacant heavyweight title. Since his brave loss to Lennox Lewis last June, Klitschko has become shockingly popular for a non-American heavyweight, drawing passionate crowds on both coasts.

By Eric Raskin

"This is the older brother," you'd say. "The one who fought Lennox Lewis and had that nasty cut over his eye."

"Oh, right. He's also the one that fought Lewis in ***Ocean's Eleven****, right?" your friend would respond.*

"No, that was Wladimir, the younger brother."

"Oh, right. He's the better one, right?"

"Well, not exactly. He's the one everyone used to think was the better one, but it's turned out that Vitali, the older brother, is the better one."

"Which is the one that got blown out against the South African guy a little while ago?"

"That's Wladimir. The younger brother. The one that isn't as good."

"And now he's fighting the South African guy again?"

"No, the one fighting the South African is Vitali. The older brother. The better one."

If you had an exasperating conversation like this with a friend who barely follows boxing in the weeks and months leading up to the Vitali Klitschko-Corrie Sanders fight on April 24, you're not alone. We all had that conversation. We've been having it for the last few years, in one form or another. To the mainstream public, Vitali and Wladimir have always just been the Klitschko brothers, two fighters lumped under one heading, two guys who might as well have been identical twins given the way nobody seemed able to tell them apart.

PHOTO BY JAN SANDERS

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Sanders was dangerous throughout with his left hand, and he even managed to hurt Klitschko badly with it in the first round. But for the most part, the towering Klitschko was able to see it coming and lean out of the way of the punch, especially as Sanders slowed after the first few rounds.

But those days should be over now. Or, at least, it should be a much less laborious conversation when you're trying to set somebody straight.

"There's Wladimir," you'll tell them. "He's the one you always see crawling around on the floor, searching for shards of his chin.

"And there's Vitali. He's the champ."

After the events of this April, there's no confusing the Klitschkos anymore. The gulf between them is illustrated clearly in THE RING'S ratings, where neither name appears among the top-10 contenders—Vitali now placing above the top 10 as the world champion, Wladimir somewhere below the top 10 after his monumental meltdown against Lamon Brewster.

Vitali Klitschko spent much of his boxing life in his younger brother's shadow, but no more.

"The history is quite interesting," Vitali explained in his endearingly broken English, "because, when I come to pro boxing, my brother was Olympic gold medalist, and [promoter Universum-Box] said, 'Who is this older brother?' They tell me, 'I take young one, and the old one is not so important.' But they take the package, two for one.

"And after that, Wladimir was favorite, until he lost against Ross Puritty, and after that I beat Herbie Hide, and everybody think, *Oh, he's the great brother, he's much better than the younger one*. But then, I lose against Chris Byrd, and everybody say, 'No heart, no determination, nothing.' Then Wladimir beat—Wladimir not beat, *destroyed*—Chris Byrd, and after that he beat some other good names, good boxers, and I was in shadow from my brother.

"And after that, the situation has changed again. You know what? We walk together. And it's not important who's better. We split our wins together, because without brother I can't reach this place."

Of course, it's easy for Vitali, nearly five years Wladimir's senior at age 32, to diplomatically insist it's "not important who's better" when it's he who has emerged as the superior fighter. Just as Venus Williams had trouble hiding her mixed emotions when her baby sister won a Grand Slam tennis title before she did, Vitali seemed to carry a chip on his shoulder as the Wladimir hype-mobile spun dust into his face. He became known as the less approachable Klitschko, the surly one. When Sanders shockingly impaled Wlad in March '03, Vitali played the bully, demanding not that Sanders grant his brother a rematch, but that the South African southpaw give *him* the first shot.

Since Vitali won over the boxing world with his gallant June '03 defeat to Lewis, however, everything has been well with the familial order. Younger brother Wladimir has gracefully—enthusiastically, even—accepted his role in the background, and Vitali has proudly and confidently vowed to achieve greatness for the both of them. When Vitali won the vacant heavyweight championship of the world by stopping Sanders in eight entertaining rounds before 17,320 Klitschko-crazy fans at the Staples Center in Los Angeles, he took another step toward that possible greatness, and Wladimir was the first to leap into the ring and embrace him when the fight was halted.

Amazingly, at no point during that embrace did Wladimir topple to the canvas, even though his chin made contact with his brother's shoulder on several occasions. *Ba-dum-bum.*

The jokes about the younger Klitschko's brittle beard have been piling up since his loss to Sanders, and when he came undone for the second time in 13 months, in the fifth round against Brewster—his stamina and his chin conspiring to spoil a dominating first four rounds—some were even suggesting that Wladimir ought to retire at age 28. Maybe that was an outlandish thought, maybe not. Certainly, though, it was unreasonable the way that some subsequently grouped the Klitschkos together in some sort of fraternity of fragility, suggesting *they* can't take it just because Wladimir apparently can't take it. Football experts wouldn't hold it against Peyton Manning if brother Eli ends up being a bust, so boxing experts shouldn't question Vitali's vitality based on Wlad's lack thereof.

Against Sanders, the elder Klitschko cemented the impression he'd created against Lewis: that he, unlike his brother, has a championship-caliber chin. To borrow a phrase from Vitali's ring entrance song, "Hotel California," he was "programmed to receive."

For some, though, the fundamental word there is *programmed*, because while Klitschko boasts the jaw, the toughness, and the defensive instincts that his little brother lacks, he also moves as robotically as anyone this side of C3PO. If he had Wladimir's athleticism and offensive fluidity, he might just be the perfect fighting machine, but alas, it seems each Klitschko only got half the equation. Vitali simply got the half that matters more.

And he's ridden that half not only to the heavyweight title, but also into the hearts of

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Although Klitschko's jab wasn't especially forceful most of the time, it was important in keeping Sanders at a distance and limiting the South African's punch output. According to CompuBox, Klitschko out-threw Sanders, 413 to 229, in overall punches.

the public. It's not just the numbers—the 17,000-plus in L.A. or the 10,823 who braved a snowstorm to see him demolish Kirk Johnson at Madison Square Garden in his previous fight; it's the rock-star reception those thousands give him. Vitali Klitschko, raised in the Ukraine and built up as a pro fighter in Germany, has somehow become a legitimate heavyweight hero in America. Crowds pop when he steps into the ring, and they pop again when he climbs the ropes in triumph after the fight. Oscar De La Hoya has nothing on Klitschko when it comes to creating a deafening arena.

"Klitschko's now fought three straight times on our network," said HBO Sports Senior Vice President of Programming Kery Davis, "and all three were very entertaining and highly rated. I can't tell you yet who he might be fighting next, but I can tell you that HBO is definitely looking to do additional fights with Vitali Klitschko."

Klitschko is beginning to enter that category of fighters who just can't make boring fights. Sure, his bout against Obed Sullivan on Showtime in 1999 was the definition of monotony, but that was a different Vitali Klitschko. Ever since he pulled the plug on his fight with Byrd due to an injured shoulder, "Dr. Iron Fist" has been on a quest to prove his heart and win fans. His loss to Lewis was the most exciting heavyweight fight of '03, and his kayo of Sanders is the frontrunner for the same distinction in '04. In a division littered with the likes of Byrd, Fres Oquendo, and the utterly unwatchable John Ruiz, Klitschko is 245 pounds of hulking salvation. As another potential "lost heavyweights" era dawns in the wake of Lewis' retirement, Klitschko gives the sport just what it needs to survive: a popular heavyweight champion.

The question is whether he's just the champion of the moment, as his idol Max Schmeling was when he claimed the vacant title nearly three-quarters of a century ago following the retirement of Gene Tunney, or *the* champion of the post-Lewis era. Could we possibly be in store for a Larry Holmes-like reign, which lasted seven years and perfectly bridged the gap between Muhammad Ali and Mike Tyson? You'd have to be insane in the Ukraine to suggest Klitschko is on Holmes' level as a fighter, but given the alarmingly weak field of challengers (Ruiz is the number-two contender to the heavyweight title!), a lengthy stay on the throne isn't out of the question.

As we look at the potential challengers to Klitschko's title, we must start with the man the new champ wants the most. Just as Holmes got an opportunity to make himself a true linear champ when Ali came out of retirement, so, too, does Klitschko want one more crack at future Hall of Famer Lewis.

"Lennox Lewis was in the dressing room to congratulate me with this title," Klitschko explained at the press conference following the Sanders fight. "I tell him many millions of fans want to see the same fight I want to see, Klitschko against Lennox Lewis. Right now, I has Lennox Lewis' title.

"Lennox is biggest name in boxing, in history of boxing," Klitschko continued, laying it on just about as thick as his accent. "He beat everybody. He didn't beat me. After our fight, Lennox promised me a rematch. Lennox is a big gentleman.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

By beating Sanders, Klitschko avenged one of his brother's losses. Although younger brother Wladimir's boxing career is currently in turmoil, both brothers were beaming after Vitali captured the championship.

I just hope Lennox make comeback."

Lewis, whose suit jacket was bulging in the belly area as he roamed the ringside section prior to Klitschko-Sanders, doesn't appear to have a comeback on his mind. He seems to be living the life and eating the meals of a retired champion, and while the itch could arise at any moment, it's probably in Lewis' best interest not to scratch it. With all the work he'd have to put into getting back into shape, and with his 39th birthday coming up in September, it's hard to envision him improving on his performance of last June 21 in a rematch with Klitschko. What's in the best interest of Klitschko, and maybe even of boxing, is not necessarily in the best interest of Lewis.

So that leaves the depressing crop of active contenders, of which there are five who could stand as logical, marketable challengers to King Klitschko:

•**Chris Byrd:** This is a natural for two reasons. First, it would give Klitschko a chance to avenge his only loss to a still-active fighter. And second, it would end any debate over who the *real* heavyweight champion is. Not that anyone recognizes beltholder Byrd as such, but many in the media won't endorse Klitschko's claim until he beats Byrd. Would those same people refuse to recognize Byrd as champ, even if he defeated Vitali again, until he avenges his loss to Wladimir? Of course not, and therein lies the hypocrisy of not supporting THE RING's recognition of Klitschko-Sanders based on one four-year-old head-to-head result. To say you can't have a heavyweight title fight without involving Byrd, a man who deserved to lose to Oquendo and drew with then-unranked Andrew Golota in his last two fights, is a serious stretch. Nevertheless, if Vitali-Byrd II could get everyone on the same page, it's a fight worth making.

It is not, however, a wildly attractive matchup. No matchup involving Byrd is. It's probably not the sort of pairing that will sell pay-per-views. But it's a fight that makes sense and one that, barring any injuries, Klitschko should win. Not only was he well ahead when he surrendered against Byrd back in 2000, but he's improved marginally since then, whereas the once-untouchable Byrd may be slipping from his perch.

This fight will probably have to wait until at least the fall, however, because Byrd appears headed toward a July rematch with Golota. Which means the same waiting period applies to ...

•**Andrew Golota:** This would have looked like a gross mismatch a few months ago, but after "The Foul Pole's" career-reviving draw with Byrd, a bout between these two big, strong, stand-up European fighters suddenly seems appealing. And it might even be a PPV seller, given the rabid fan support both fighters receive. If Golota doesn't freak out due to Klitschko's intimidating presence, this could be a competitive fight, especially in light of Golota's past success hitting tall heavyweights.

•**Lamon Brewster:** No, Brewster isn't really all that good, and yes, this has all the makings of a blowout. But Universum obviously enjoys the "Revenge Of The Brother" angle. Whether there's enough money available to convince Don King to serve up his newest heavyweight beltholder is another issue, of course. But for champ Klitschko, an opportunity to avenge another of Wladimir's losses without facing the peril that Sanders presented makes a lot of sense. As long as they go light on the Vaseline on his legs, this should be easy.

•**Mike Tyson:** Sounding for all the world like the Ukrainian Martin Luther King, Klitschko said after the Sanders fight that if Lewis won't un-retire for him, his second choice is a no-brainer:

"I have a dream," Klitschko announced, "since I was 15 years old. I saw this young guy, the youngest heavyweight to win the title. It's Iron Mike. I dreamed that sometime we fight each other, and I beat him."

It took beating a pitifully used up version of Tyson for Lewis, in the second-to-last fight of his illustrious career, to gain recognition from the mainstream sports fans as the champion. Tyson is no less used up now, but his name on a heavyweight's resume still brings validation. It's a long-shot that Tyson puts his health on the line again like this, but if he's desperate enough for cash, maybe, just maybe, Klitschko will get to live his dream.

•**James Toney:** In a poll conducted by ESPN.com shortly after Klitschko-Sanders, Toney was the clear choice of the people (over Byrd, Ruiz, Brewster, and Hasim Rahman) in response to the question, "Which of these RING magazine top-10 heavyweights do you think can defeat Vitali Klitschko?" Nearly as many fans chose Toney as chose the other four combined. Toney, not surprisingly, agrees with that sentiment.

"I'll beat both Klitschkos on the same night. They can't spell 'fight,'" Toney said as he temporarily commandeered the podium at the postfight media conference.

Klitschko vs. Toney is a fascinating clash of styles, the ultimate experiment of size vs. skill. Unlike fellow blown-up middleweight Roy Jones, Toney is willing enough to stand in punching range to have a chance. Would he be the favorite, giving away some 10 inches and 25 pounds? Probably not. Do we really know how effective a heavyweight he is, based on one sensational showing against an ancient Evander Holyfield? No. Would he be at an additional disadvantage because he's fresh off surgery to fix a ruptured Achilles tendon? Possibly.

But despite all of these questions about Toney, is it still an intriguing fight? Absolutely.

That's due in large part to the fact that we still have nearly as many questions about Klitschko. The only one we shouldn't be hearing anymore is, "Which brother is he?" ■

MONSTER'S BRAWL

When it comes to his physique, Corrie Sanders has always been more Governor Schwarzenegger than Terminator Schwarzenegger, but the South African looked especially soft for the biggest fight of his career, a shot at the vacant RING heavyweight title in front of Governor Ah-nuld and 17,000-plus others at the Staples Center. However weak his prefight effort may have been, though, Sanders' in-ring effort was memorably gutsy, and together he and Vitali Klitschko gave the fans their money's worth with eight rounds of suspenseful, bombs-away action. In the end, a new champion was decisively crowned, and one of boxing's great could-have-beens called it a career.

Fighting under the pressure of having to save the family name just two weeks after the implosion of brother Wladimir, Klitschko, 245, Los Angeles via Kiev, Ukraine, looked nervous in the early going. Sanders, 235, Pretoria, South Africa, gave him reason to feel nervous with 15 seconds left in the round, landing a booming counter left hand that sent a stunned Klitschko scurrying across the ring. After failing to tie Sanders up, Klitschko hit the canvas just before the bell, but it was correctly ruled a slip by referee Jon Schorle (USA).

Clearly aware that southpaw Sanders, 38, was trying to walk him into a fight-ending left, Klitschko, 32, pounded his foe with a cautious effectiveness in the second, and was doing the same in the third until he walked into another left with about a minute to go. For the last 60 seconds, the war was on, both heavyweights launching powershots in a sensational exchange that had the crowd screaming. Klitschko, repeatedly landing his right hand, got the better of it.

Both men took the fourth round off (especially the gassed Sanders), but Klitschko opened up again in the fifth and landed a chopping right hand with 20 seconds to go that wobbled the underdog. Sanders, his nose now bloodied, barely stayed on his feet through Klitschko's determined follow-up assault, and Compu-Box stats supported the round's one-sided appearance, registering a 38-1 edge for Klitschko in landed punches.

The sixth was Sanders' last gasp, and a good left cross buzzed the Ukrainian early in the round. After that, however, it was all Klitschko, 34-2 (33), as Sanders, 39-3 (29), gradually wilted. He took a pounding in the seventh while offering little in return, and after a particularly brutal onslaught of right hands in the eighth left the brave lefty helpless along the ropes, Schorle stepped in and called a perfectly timed halt at 2:46 of the round.

PHOTO BY HECTOR MATA/GETTY IMAGES

Sanders gamely fields a searing right hand

Klitschko earned $1,161,875 for the night's work, while Sanders pulled in $962,500.

"He never knocked me down, and that means a lot to me," Sanders said at a press conference the next day, having missed the postfight presser to have a broken nose and several bad cuts attended to. Upon his return to South Africa, Sanders announced his retirement. If nothing else, Klitschko is getting quite adept at convincing opponents never to fight again.

Television: HBO

Promoter: K2, in association with Universum-Box and Lion Promotions

(4-24-04)

—ER

SPECIAL Experts' Poll: IS JERMAIN TAYLOR

Compiled by Joe Santoliquito

Boxing's prime timers are getting old. Go down the list and see for yourself. A quick inventory of today's pound-for-pound top 10 reveals that only three fighters are under the age of 30: Floyd Mayweather, Manny Pacquiao, and Erik Morales. And while all three are stars, it could be argued that none qualify as superstars.

So, in the search for the next superstar, we've been forced to turn to the influx of new talent coming up. The problem is, none of the U.S. Olympians from 2000 have really distinguished themselves as potential superstars—except for one, Jermain Taylor.

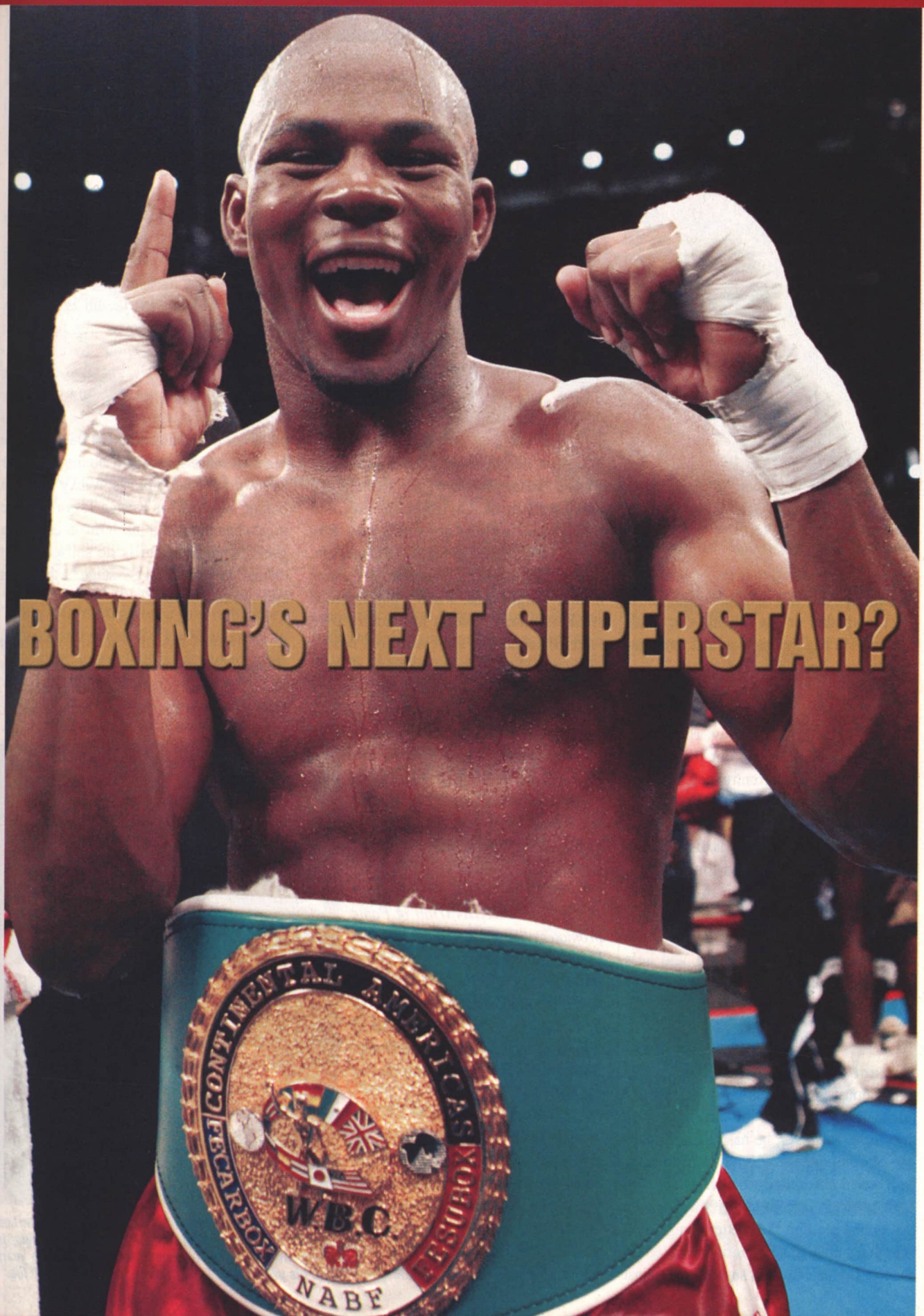
The likable middleweight contender has navigated through his first 20 professional fights unscathed in the loss column, with 15 of his wins coming by knockout.

His most recent victory as of press time came against tested veteran Alex Bunema, whom Taylor dispatched in seven rounds in late-March. Some experts were impressed by Taylor's showing against Bunema, while some came away wanting to see more, and still others were not impressed at all.

With boxing in desperate need of new blood, THE RING took the next step and appealed to experts as to what they think of the Little Rock, Arkansas, native. As you would expect when discussing a fighter so unproven, opinions varied.

Here's what 20 experts polled by THE RING had to say in response to the question: Is Jermain Taylor boxing's next superstar?

TIM SMITH (*New York* ***Daily News*** *boxing writer*): "To be a superstar, there has to be a confluence of things to happen. Taylor certainly has the qualities. He's a good boxer, with good power. He has a good story, as an Olympian, but there is always something else that has to go with that. What's going to have to happen for him is to get matched against an established star, which would mean Bernard Hopkins, Oscar De La Hoya, or Felix Trinidad, and beat one



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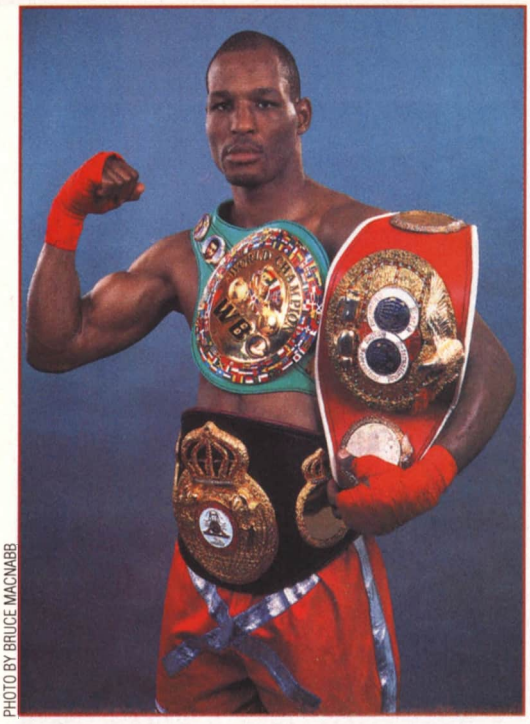


PHOTO BY BRUCE MACNABB

Many experts agree that for Taylor to achieve superstardom, he must first defeat middleweight champion Bernard Hopkins, which will not be an easy task.

of them. By the end of 2005, we'll know exactly whether or not Jermain can reach stardom. He has the backing and temperament to do it. I certainly think he can."

DAN RAFAEL (***USA Today*** *boxing writer*): "Let's put it this way: He has the best chance of the guys out there right now. He's clearly the frontrunner. Since he turned pro, he's gotten better and better with each fight. The first thing you notice is that he has charisma. His fights have been exciting, he's a good-looking guy, and he seems like a down-to-earth guy who likes what he does. He seems to enjoy the fans and the press, and all of those things help. He's very likable, and he's being moved just fine. He has a chance to be a true force."

KEVIN IOLE (***Las Vegas Review-Journal*** *boxing writer*): "Taylor is a tremendous, tremendous prospect, and it's fair to say he's one of the best fighters in the world. However, he hasn't fought anyone of consequence. Taylor is destined to be a world champion; whether or not he's a superstar, I have to hold reservation on that until I see him face better competition than Alex Bunema. There is a very good chance Taylor can be a superstar. Against any middleweight in the world, except for Bernard Hopkins, he can hold his own."

TIM GRAHAM (***Buffalo News*** *and ESPN.com boxing writer*):"From what I've seen, I'd say no. I think Jermain Taylor will go down as a fine champion. But fighters need to have a certain something extra to be considered a superstar, and I don't think Jermain Taylor has that. For example, I don't know if I can see Jermain Taylor carrying a pay-per-view event. Then again, neither can Floyd Mayweather carry a pay-per-view, though he's a great champion."

BRIAN KENNY (*ESPN2* ***Friday Night Fights*** *studio host*): "I think Taylor is special, and looking forward to the post-Roy Jones, post-Bernard Hopkins era, there aren't a lot of special fighters in that weight area. I don't put as much stock as others have in his victory over Alex Bunema; that's a classic old boxing trick, pounding on a smaller man. I don't know whether or not he can be a superstar. To become a superstar, you have to have the superfights and super competition in front of you. Maybe he can get Hopkins on his way out. Taylor needs a name to beat. Otherwise, I don't see a lot of guys out there who can catapult Taylor into the mainstream."

DON CHARGIN (*Hall of Fame promoter*): "Right now, he sure looks like it. It looks like Taylor has everything. From the old school, you want to see the kid get nailed and see how he reacts. But I like everything about him. He punches well, he has tremendous power, and he's being moved the right way."

FRANKLIN McNEIL (***Newark Star-Ledger*** *boxing writer*): "It's too soon to say whether or not he will be a superstar. My concern for Jermain is that I'd like to see him fight real middleweights, because I don't know how well he can handle pressure, or how he takes a punch. The other thing is that he seems very reluctant to attack an opponent's body. The potential is there for him to be a superstar, and if he gets past someone like a William Joppy, that will say a lot. If he survives an aggressive Joppy, I would say he could be the next superstar in the sport."

JOE TESSITORE (*ESPN2* ***Friday Night Fights*** *blow-by-blow announcer*):"He's the next great champion, but I don't know if he's boxing's next great superstar. I liked what he did against Alex Bunema, but I'd like to see him fight better competition. I don't know if he can transcend boxing to the level of an Oscar De La Hoya or a Roy Jones. I would lean more toward no than toward yes. I'm not speaking about his boxing ability. I think there's a big difference between a boxing superstar and a great champion. Is Winky Wright a boxing superstar? Is Kostya Tszyu? They're great champions. I think Jermain could be a great champion, but is he self-confident enough to carry a bigger stage? I think he's still working on that."

NORM FRAUENHEIM (***Arizona Republic*** *boxing writer*): "Jermain certainly has all the makings to become a superstar. He already has the best jab in the division.

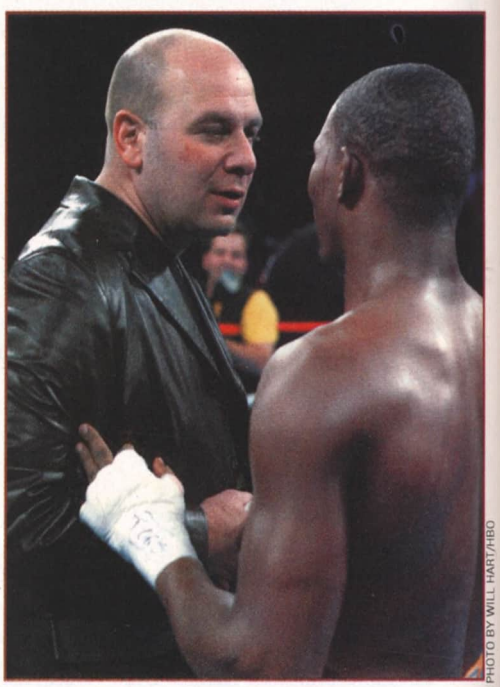


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Some experts have criticized how slowly promoter Lou DiBella has moved Taylor, while others feel Taylor is being moved at the right pace. More than three years into his pro career, Taylor has yet to face a top-10 foe.

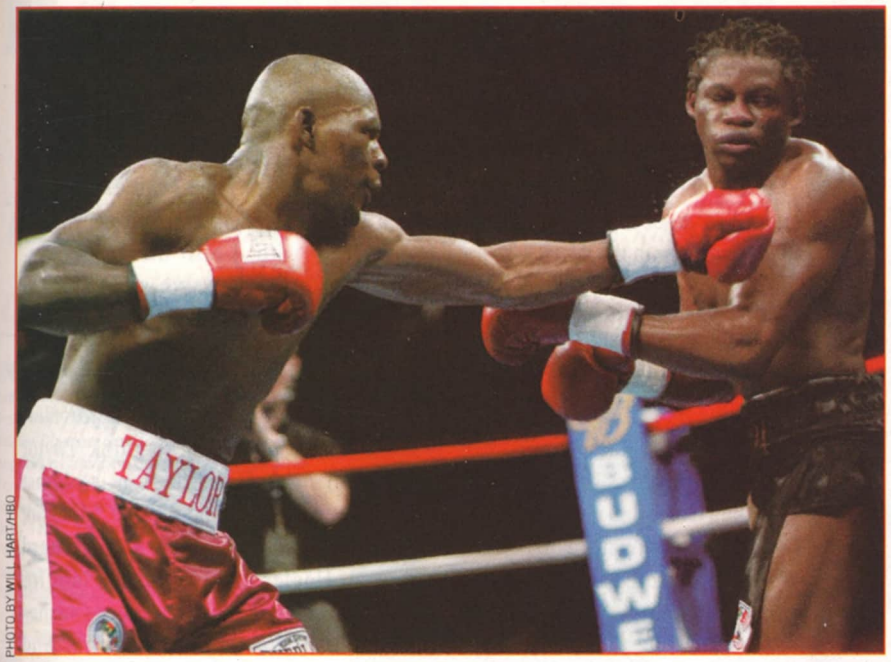


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Taylor delivered a heavy, steady left jab en route to stopping veteran trialhorse Alex Bunema in seven rounds in March. Some experts said the victory didn't mean much because Bunema is really a junior middleweight, while others were impressed by the abilities Taylor showed.

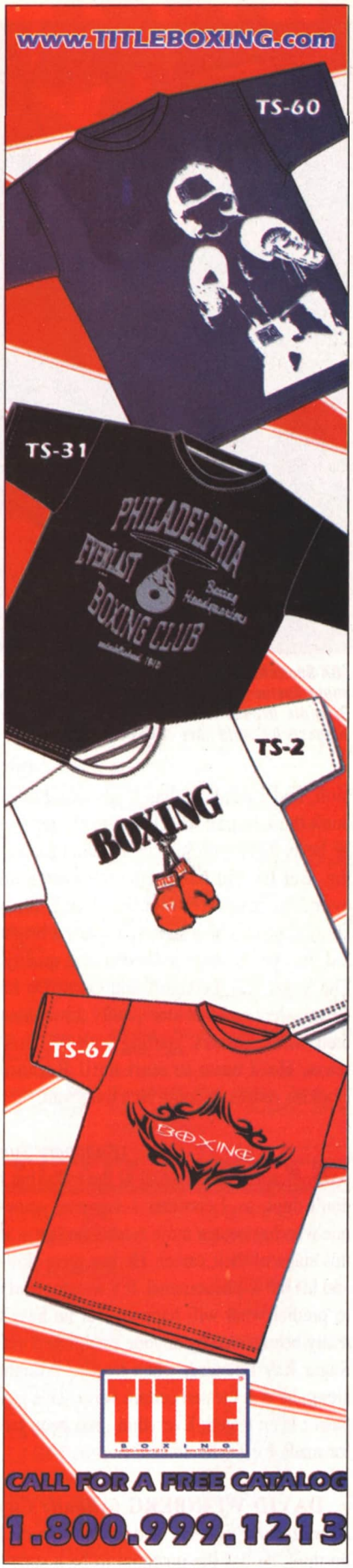
The only problem is that you don't become a superstar unless you beat a superstar, and I don't know if that's going to happen. Things could clear up a lot, if Bernard Hopkins and Oscar De La Hoya meet in September. So much of boxing today deals with Latin stardom. If De La Hoya were to beat Hopkins, and that's a big if, that opens up the possibility to take on Jermain Taylor. With Felix Trinidad coming out of retirement, that's another possibility. I would like to see Jermain Taylor face one of those guys, but I don't think that's going to happen."

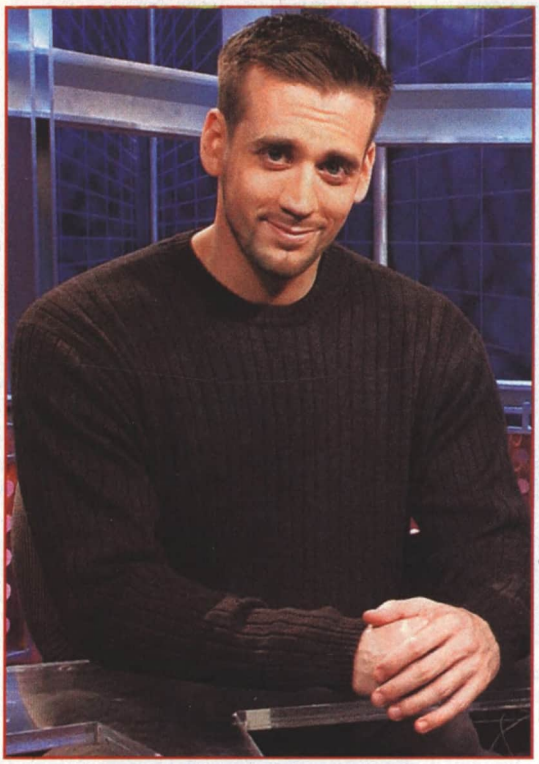
MAX KELLERMAN (*FOX SportsNet boxing analyst*): "I don't think he's going to be boxing's next superstar. He's one of the best young contenders in boxing, and he's a nice package for a fighter, with a winning personality. But to be a superstar, something has to jump out at you. Larry Holmes was a boxing superstar, but not the kind of crossover star Muhammad Ali was. Bernard Hopkins is as good as Marvin Hagler, but he doesn't have that crossover appeal. Except for the jab in his last fight, nothing has jumped off the screen about Jermain. At this moment, if you asked me to make a bet on Jermain Taylor being a superstar, I'd say no. I am rooting for him, however, to do it. I just have to see more of him at increasingly higher levels."

RONNIE SHIELDS: (*trainer of heavyweight Dominick Guinn*):"I think Jermain is a good fighter, and he has the potential to be a superstar. But as long as Bernard Hopkins is there, he'll continue to be a contender because Hopkins is the best middleweight in the world. And I don't see anyone challenging Hopkins right now. Jermain has star quality. He's a good fighter who can beat anyone at anytime, but until Bernard Hopkins gets beat, Jermain won't be able step into that superstar role anytime soon."

AL BERNSTEIN (***Showtime Championship Boxing*** *ringside analyst*): "I would say yes. I've long felt that way. But you have to put an asterisk next to someone's name until they have a major fight, and he hasn't. With what we've seen of Taylor, it's hard not to see him being a star. He's continued to improve, and has an excellent trainer in Pat Burns. Jermain does everything well. He's a great bodypuncher, one of the four or five best in boxing right now. Offensively, there's nothing wanting from his style. Defensively, he's good, and the only question we don't know is how he'll react when some big-punching middleweight hits him."

HAROLD "SHADOW" KNIGHT (*trainer of heavyweight contender Monte Barrett*): "I think Jermain is a future cham-





FOX SportsNet boxing analyst Max Kellerman has his doubts about Taylor eventually becoming a superstar, saying the Olympic bronze medalist hasn't shown that spark that suggests he could have crossover appeal.

pion, and I think he has loads of talent. I don't think he can whack that hard, because he beats guys with his combination punching. But the kid has champion written all over him, and he's focused. But I don't know if he can be a superstar. He's a bright kid, but you're born with that star quality. The Sugar Ray Leonards and Oscar De La Hoyas, they had that star quality throughout their whole careers, starting with the amateurs. He'd have to wait until Bernard Hopkins retires. It could be a long wait."

LEM SATTERFIELD (*Baltimore Sun boxing writer*): "He has all of the tools, but I don't think so. I consider a superstar someone who has beaten more established guys at this stage of their career. He has great skills and his jab is phenomenal. It's way too early to predict what will happen. But he hasn't really been tested by anyone established yet. Sugar Ray Leonard, when he was brought along, he'd get tested certain ways. This guy hasn't been tested. Everything has been tailor-made for Taylor so far."

DAVID WEINBERG (*Atlantic City Press boxing writer*): "I don't know yet. I do think he has the potential to be a superstar in the sport. There isn't a lot out there at the moment, and he has everything you look for so far. He seems to have a willingness to learn and he doesn't believe in his own hype. If he continues to develop, yes, he can be a superstar in the sport."

CALVIN WATKINS (*Dallas Morning News boxing writer*): "I think so. I like him. He's convinced me. He's being moved slow, but look at the other Olympians. They're done. Miguel Cotto may be the only other guy coming out of the Olympics who is undefeated and has star quality. Everyone else has either suffered a loss, or has been a major disappointment. Jermain probably won't be fighting Bernard Hopkins anytime soon, but he'll have to fight Hopkins by next year if he wants to reach that superstar level."

GEORGE WILLIS (*New York Post boxing writer*): "I think Jermain is an outstanding prospect, and he could be the next great superstar, but a lot depends on Bernard Hopkins. I think Jermain has star quality. He's a good-looking fighter and a good kid, he has skills, and he's hungry. He wants to be great. With all of the prospects out there, Jermain might be the diamond."

KEITH IDEC (*Herald News [New Jersey] boxing writer*): "It depends on what happens when he starts fighting better than B-level and C-level opponents. It's obvious he has the look, the talent, and the charisma; what could make him that superstar is beating Bernard Hopkins. But I don't see that fight happening anytime soon. Jermain needs a couple of more tests to fight at the level of Hopkins. But he's a real likable kid and I would tend to think he can be the next superstar in boxing. Out of the 2000 American Olympians, he looks to have the best chance to have a crossover effect."

JOHN WHISLER (*San Antonio Express boxing writer*): "I would say yes. To me, it looks like Jermain or Miguel Cotto seem the best choices. Jermain has a good story to tell and he seems to have the complete package right now. You don't want to move him too fast, or too slow, but I was really impressed with his Bunema fight. What has impressed me most, however, has been his jab. To me, it seems like a purpose punch. He knows what to follow it up with. I also like his aggression. With his aggressive style and the story he has to tell, he has the potential to be the next superstar."

TONY PAIGE (*radio host for New York's WFAN 660 AM*): "I think Taylor is the real deal. His situation is almost like Marvin Hagler and Carlos Monzon, when it comes to Taylor and Bernard Hopkins. Hagler had to wait his turn for Monzon to leave. When Bernard finishes with Oscar, he might be gone, and Taylor could run the table with what's out there. He's fun to watch. He's a good-looking kid, and I just like the way he handles himself in the ring." ■

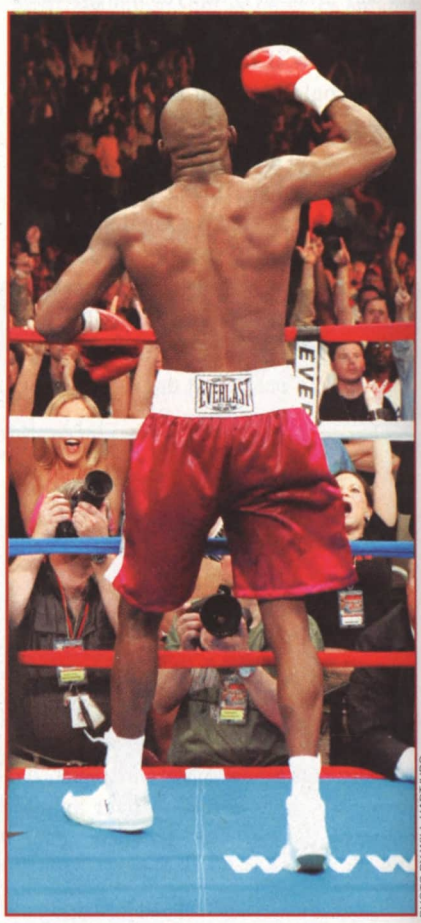


PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Taylor had the crowd in his corner when he stopped Bunema, thanks to the fight taking place in his hometown of Little Rock, Arkansas. Whether Taylor can draw massive crowds outside of Little Rock remains to be seen.

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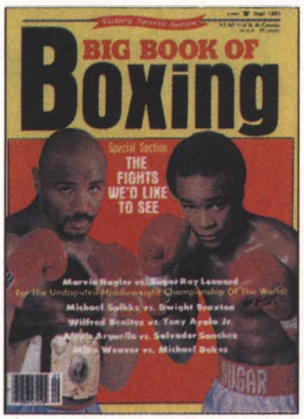

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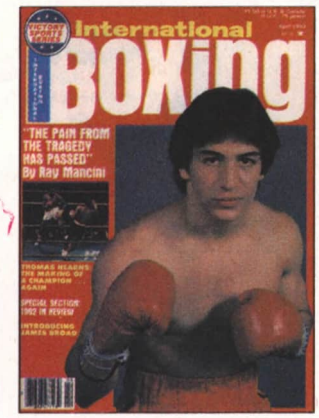

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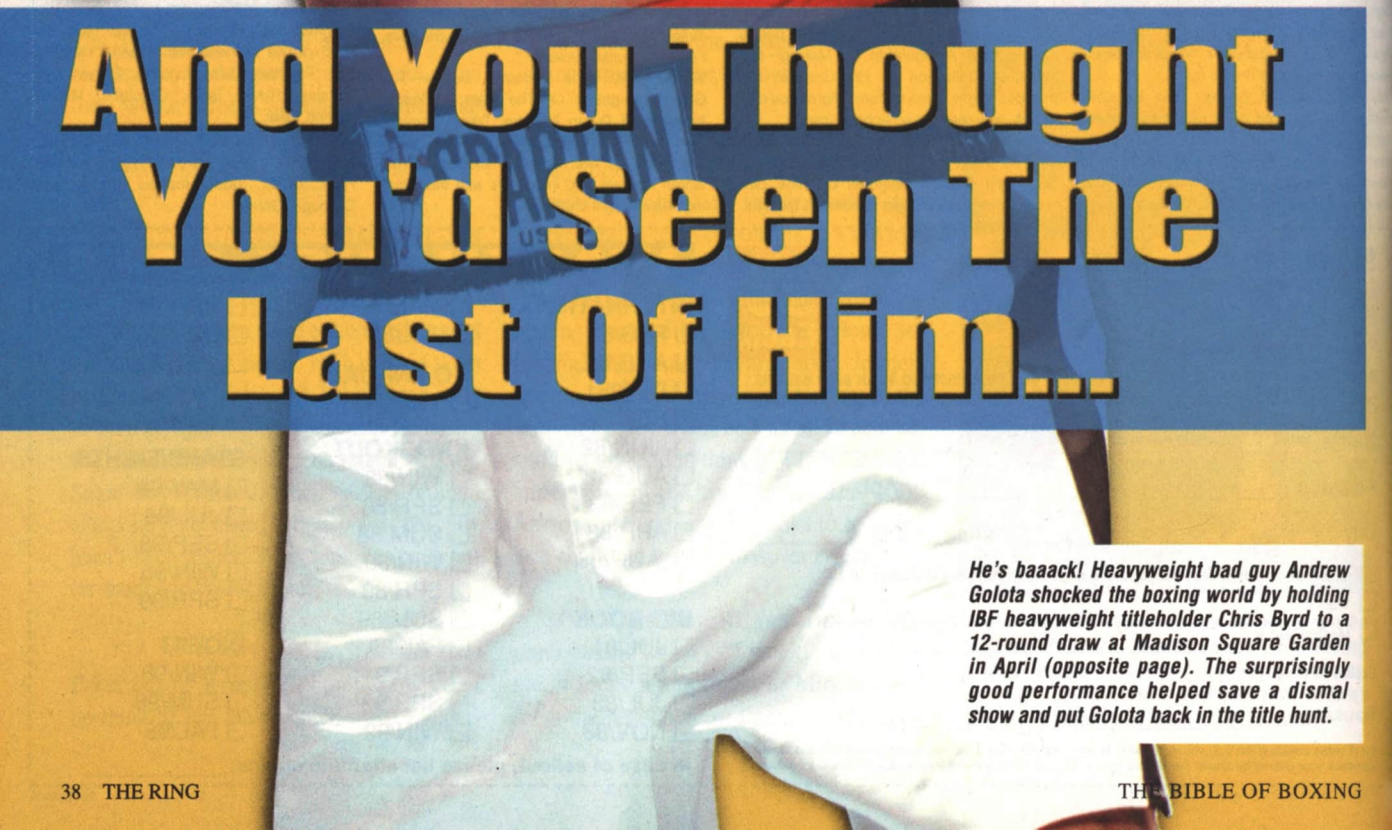


He's baaack! Heavyweight bad guy Andrew Golota shocked the boxing world by holding IBF heavyweight titleholder Chris Byrd to a 12-round draw at Madison Square Garden in April (opposite page). The surprisingly good performance helped save a dismal show and put Golota back in the title hunt.

ANDREW GOLOTA'S UNLIKELY RESURRECTION

By Nigel Collins

PHOTOS BY WILL HART/HBO

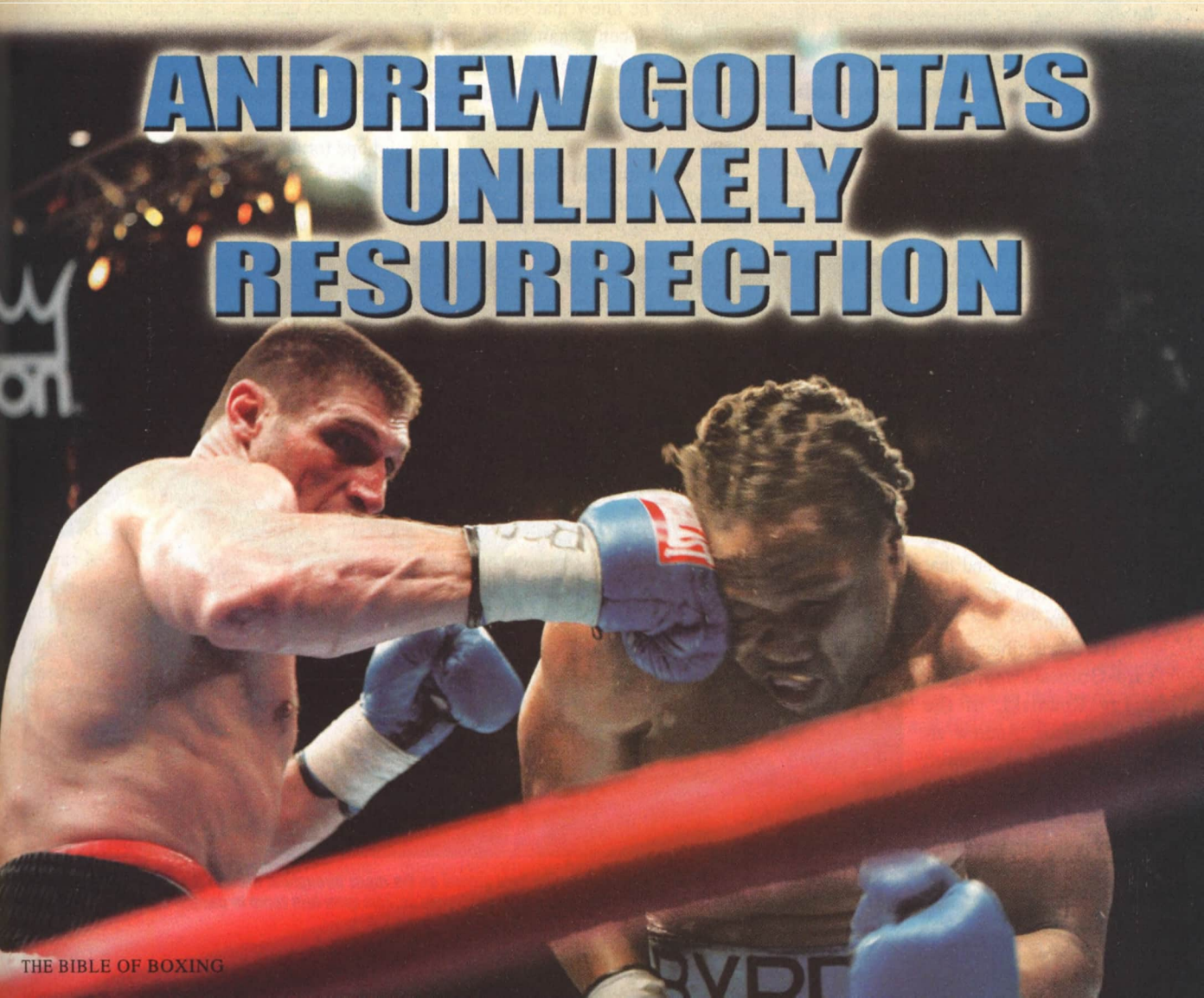
With heavyweight boxing struggling to stay afloat as a viable commodity in the wake of Lennox Lewis' retirement, the sport's so-called glamour division has to take its heroes wherever it can find them. And on the evening of April 17, it found a most unlikely one in the form of Andrew Golota, heretofore, one of the most infamous villains of the past decade. When he ducked between the ropes, it was almost as if some movie monster had risen from the grave and was fixing to terrorize us again.

Still, if ever the heavyweight division was in need of someone to lift it out of the depths it had descended into, it was on this night. Promoter Don King had already listened to almost 45 minutes of virtually non-stop booing from the gathering of 15,195 at Madison Square Garden. Apparently, watching John Ruiz and Fres Oquendo clinch their way through what passes for a heavyweight title bout under the auspices of the WBA had put the paying customers in a bad mood. Another stinker would have been devastating.

As far as the main event was concerned, it seemed the best we could hope for was to avoid an outright disaster. After all, in one corner was defending IBF heavyweight beltholder Chris Byrd, an admirable but boring boxer, and in the other, Golota, who had shamed both himself and the sport on more occasions than most of us wished to recall. On top of that, the IBF had been widely criticized for suddenly slipping Golota into its top 15 after he'd signed with King and been given the crack at Byrd. The stage seemed set for a fiasco of potentially crippling proportions.

Then came one of those pleasant surprises that sometimes saves the sport from itself: Byrd and Golota fought to an entertaining draw, albeit one that probably seemed better than it really was due to the dreck that proceeded it. Still, it was Golota's unexpectedly strong performance that did more to salvage the show than anything else. And after almost three years out in the cold, the erstwhile "Foul Pole" was back in the heavyweight picture. Well, poking his head into the frame, anyway.

Prior to the Byrd fight, the last time most fans saw Golota he was being pelted with debris as he stalked out of the ring after quitting against Mike Tyson in



Golota is again working with original trainer Sam Colonna (left), with whom he has never lost a fight. Golota's manager, Ziggy Rozalski, says that Colonna is the only trainer demanding enough on Golota to get him in top condition.

October 2000. Remember that cup of soda that nailed him square and exploded like a water balloon? At the time, it seemed inconceivable that Golota would ever again resurface as a serious contender. After all, his dog act against Tyson was only the final episode in a long history of deplorable behavior. There were also the back-to-back disqualification losses to Riddick Bowe, the biting of Samson Po'uha, the spastic freeze-up against Lewis, and the quit job versus Michael Grant. Most people figured there was no way his career could be salvaged, and that included Golota and those closest to him.

"It was a terrible night," said Golota's manager, Ziggy Rozalski, of the Tyson fiasco. "Andrew always felt that he screwed up the Tyson fight. He was down on himself. It wasn't very pleasant because a lot of fans were down on him, too."

One can only imagine what Golota went through. Despite his hulking physique and gruff demeanor, he's still very much a human being, and obviously vulnerable to emotional distress.

"After the Tyson fight I didn't want to be around boxing anymore," said Golota. "I didn't even want to think about boxing anymore. But after a while, I have not much to do. I'm still young, and able to do something. And I didn't leave any mark, like winning a championship belt. So I wanted to establish my position by going back into boxing."

It wasn't easy. Originally, even Rozalski was against Golota making a comeback, especially since he knew that Golota was in decent financial shape and didn't need to fight. But finally Rozalski agreed to help, providing Golota returned to his original trainer, Sam Colonna.

"He was with Sam from his first pro fight until his 22nd, and then they made a deal with Main Events, and they got Lou Duva and Roger Bloodworth, and then Al Certo," said Rozalski. "But Sam knows how Andrew operates. Discipline is number one with Sam. The other guys, they didn't press all the buttons. They weren't tough on him. Sam is very tough on him. There's a chemistry there. With Sam, Andrew never lost a fight."

Rozalski quickly discovered that Golota's name was poison. Nobody was interested in giving the troubled heavyweight yet another chance, so Rozalski decided to promote Golota himself, and on August 14, 2003, Golota returned with a seventh-round kayo of Brian Nix. Three months later, he stopped Terrence Lewis in six rounds. It didn't change a thing; most promoters were still far from enthusiastic.

"Nobody would put us on a show, so I went to see Don King," said Rozalski. "He's the only guy willing to help us. He was very pleasant and welcomed us with open arms. I was very shocked. Only in America does the black man help the white man. I wasn't demanding. Anything Mr. King gave us, I was willing to take."

What King gave them was a lot more than Golota and Rozalski had dared to hope for: a crack at IBF heavyweight titleholder Byrd.

The match understandably met with

Golota turned out to be especially adept at keeping Byrd pinned on the ropes throughout most of the 12-rounder. Normally, the IBF heavyweight titleholder fights well off the ropes, but Golota seldom gave him room to counter effectively.

Even when Byrd extricated himself from the ropes, Golota managed to score with his left jab. The Polish heavyweight's performance was so effective, you couldn't help but wonder what would have happened in his career if he hadn't been such a loose cannon.

much media criticism. Golota had done nothing to earn a title shot, even at an alphabet version, and besides, hadn't he already done enough to bring shame on the beleaguered sport? Was it really worth the risk on a pay-per-view card at the Garden?

"Golota has baggage," admitted King. "He's a guy who likes to hit people in the testicles. He's a guy that bites. But he asked for redemption, he asked for forgiveness. I'm giving him redemption and forgiveness."

King's decision to give Golota a chance probably wasn't as altruistic as he would have us believe. Despite Golota's nefarious past—and perhaps in part because of it—he has retained a surprisingly large constituency, especially among Polish-Americans. Although his pair of comeback bouts took place in comparatively small venues, the Nix and Lewis fights had drawn turn-away crowds, and if the number of Polish flags at the Garden and the noisy reception Golota received were any indication, a significant segment of the boxing audience has already forgiven him his trespasses.

Byrd was coming off a poor performance in his previous start, a debatable 12-round decision over Oquendo in September 2003. Even so, he figured to box his way to a relatively easy decision over the slow-footed Golota. That's if Golota didn't lose his cool and do something stupid first. But instead of a rusty, emotionally unstable challenger, Byrd found himself pitted against a well-conditioned, seemingly well-adjusted opponent.

The first two rounds were not much of an improvement over the stupefying Ruiz-Oquendo affair. Golota marched forward, while Byrd ducked, dodged, and pecked away without much enthusiasm. But midway into the third, it began to become clear that Byrd wasn't going to have the cakewalk many envisioned. Golota, who enjoyed a 27-pound advantage at 237½, made good use of his bulk to keep Byrd pinned to the ropes for much of the round.

Although others have tried the same tactics, only Ike Ibeabuchi has had much success. Most of Byrd's opponents find themselves unable to tag such an inviting target, and instead miss wildly and wind up eating a mouthful of counters for their trouble. But Golota did things slightly differently than most of those who have gone before him: He stayed so close to Byrd, the defending beltholder hardly had room to breathe. Those few extra inches crowded Byrd to such a degree that he was never able to counter Golota anywhere near as effectively as he had Evander Holyfield or David Tua.

Golota also took a more measured approach with his own offense. Instead of swinging for the fences, he shortened up on his punches, and was content to score with compact, clubbing blows on the inside and accurate jabs at long range. Rather than load up, the underdog just let his hands go.

Not that Byrd was totally ineffective. From time to time, he was able to escape the ropes and nail Golota with some snappy-looking head punches. Occasionally, he looked a little bit like Muhammad Ali coming off the ropes to drill George Foreman in "The Rumble In The Jungle." But unlike Foreman against Ali, Golota fought well within himself and never

Byrd rallied down the stretch to produce some of the best give-and-take action of the night and salvage a draw. Although no official announcement had been made as of press time, a rematch was set for July.

came close to punching himself out.

After the fight, Byrd claimed that he fought the way he did by design, but could have "boxed circles around [Golota] all night long." Colonna, for one, wasn't buying it.

"Then why didn't he do it?" Golota's trainer asked BoxingInsider.com. "I think Andrew was just too strong for him and he couldn't do what he wanted."

There were no knockdowns, and many of the rounds were close. Perhaps the biggest surprise was that although he stepped on Byrd's feet a few times and landed a few to the back of the head, Golota got through the entire 12 rounds without committing a major foul.

"I'm a clean fighter now. I shower two, three times a day," said Golota, reviving his favorite joke from earlier in his career.

As Golota's chance of springing an upset grew increasingly likely, the Garden crowd grew louder and louder in its support for the underdog. How you scored it probably had a lot to do with whether you preferred Golota's steadier but not always effective work rate, or Byrd's sporadic bursts of accurate punching. In truth, there wasn't much between them. It was just that Golota was fighting so surprisingly well, it might have seemed that he was doing better than he actually was.

With the belt hanging in the balance, Byrd stepped it up a notch in the final two rounds, which resulted in some of the most spirited exchanges of the fight. Down the stretch, the Garden was rocking, a stark contrast from the reaction to Ruiz-Oquendo.

Although both rounds were close, Byrd's counters were enough to edge both the 11th and 12th on THE RING's scorecard, and give him a narrow 115-114 advantage overall. All three official judges also had it close. Tony Paolillo scored 115-113 for Byrd, while Steve Weisfeld had Golota up by the same 115-113 tally. Melvina Lathan split the difference with a 114-114 stalemate. On balance, it was an eminently fair verdict.

As is usually the case when a fight ends in a draw, both men thought they'd done enough to win.

"I will go back and look at the film, but in my mind there was no questions I won the fight," said Golota after first storming out of the ring in disappointment and then quickly calming down and returning for a postfight interview.

"I thought I stole the early rounds and won the fight," countered Byrd, 36-2-1 (20). "He never really hurt me. A couple of them stung, but I never got hurt. But don't be fooled. Andrew Golota can fight. Don't underestimate him."

When asked if he considered it his best performance, Golota, 38-4-1 (31) with 1 no-contest, was guarded in his assessment.

"Well, it was 12 rounds, so it was the longest performance so far. I've never gone 12 rounds before. Before, I did not feel that I was capable of going 12 rounds. But now I've proved that I'm capable."

Even though Golota has gone 10 rounds on four occasions, according to Rozalski, self-doubt concerning his ability to fight hard over the distance has been one of the root causes of his fighter's bizarre behavior.

"Andrew fought a clean fight because he was in shape," said Rozalski of the Byrd bout. "The other fights, they didn't get him in shape. By the second or third round, he couldn't breathe anymore. Then he starts doing the crazy stuff."

To a certain extent, Rozalski's theory makes sense. Golota's tribulations have always seemed linked to a lack of confidence. Even so, being reunited with his original trainer and performing well against a slippery customer like Byrd doesn't necessarily mean all of Golota's problems are behind him. The fact that Byrd didn't have a big enough punch to do any serious damage could very well have played a part in Golota's newfound confidence. In any event, it will take a series of similar outings to convince the majority that this is indeed a new Golota, and thanks to his affiliation with King, it looks like he'll get an opportunity to do just that. A rematch against Byrd was scheduled for July 10.

The weekend following the Byrd fight, Golota and Rozalski visited King in Florida, where the promoter threw a barbeque for the resurrected heavyweight and his manager. Naturally, kielbasa was on the grill.

At age 36, Golota doesn't have much time left to make amends. Undoubtedly, there are those who believe the panicky Pole doesn't deserve an Indian summer to what has been to date a wasted career. On the other hand, most of the fans that suffered through the undercard on King's April 17 show probably feel Golota has already made a small down payment on redemption. ■

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GATTI'S PERFECT OPPONENT

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO

By William Dettloff

On the face of it, you would think getting paid to keep Arturo Gatti in the junior welterweight mix and in the hearts of the guys in the seats is a pretty sweet deal. What's to do? You pick a guy for him, then wind him up and let him go. Your job is done. Gatti does the rest. He brings the blood and the heart and the punch. He brings the fans to the Jersey shore or to the Connecticut woods. All you have to do is hope his skin holds together and that all the punches and the partying and whatever else hasn't caught up with him yet, so he can make some good money while he still can enjoy it. That's the extent of it. He does everything else. It's good work if you can get it.

That's the deal on the face of it. Carl Moretti of Main Events, Gatti's promoter, and Pat Lynch, his manager, probably would corroborate it if you asked them because they love Gatti, but also because they're in the fight business and managers and promoters are paid to make their guy look good. In truth, their job cannot be easy. Gatti, 37-6 (28), is a marvelously flawed fighter whose value in the main is his ability to heroically and with as much drama as possible overcome his flaws with will and guts and a good hook to the chin (his willingness to selec-

Can Dorin Pick Up Where Ward Left Off?

tively play defense notwithstanding). It is Lynch and Moretti's job to put him in with guys good enough to remind us why we too love Gatti, but not so good that no amount of heroics will save him. Gatti's match against Leo Dorin in July in Atlantic City is their latest attempt to walk that very tenuous line.

The good news, at least for us, is that in December we will almost assuredly look back on Gatti-Dorin as a Fight of the Year finalist. Barring an early-round stoppage on cuts or some bizarre only-in-boxing-type disaster, it simply cannot miss. We know about Gatti. Much of it too has to do with Dorin, who chugs after opponents not so much with a blatant inattention to defense, but rather with a throwaway casualness that suggests that if not for the nagging of his trainer, he wouldn't move his head a half-inch in any direction. *I'm going to get tagged anyway*, Dorin seems to be saying. *Why the fuss over a few more?* Then he gets close and throws a hundred punches without taking a breath, and he does it round after round after round. He suffocates guys and bleeds all over them too, not unimportantly, and goes about it all with a nonchalance that's odd for a man who is working essentially with his nose about an inch from his opponent's sternum, stubby arms churning all the while.

"Dorin is not a big puncher, but comes to fight," veteran trainer Ronnie Shields told THE RING. "It's a very competitive fight with the styles they have. But he gets hit a lot, and I think Gatti can hurt him."

In Shields' view, Dorin's lack of tenure against bigger-name fighters—his most accomplished foe is former IBF lightweight titlist Paul Spadafora, with whom he fought

PHOTOS BY TOM CASINO

Part of the drama of recent Gatti fights is knowing that no matter how well he boxes behind his jab (top), he will at some time during the bout stand and trade (above). Gatti used both styles to good effect in the second and third Micky Ward bouts, but he might be better served sticking to boxing versus Dorin.

to a bloody, memorable draw in May of last year—will be his undoing.

"It's a big step up for Dorin," said Shields. "He's never fought anybody like Gatti, and I think Gatti's experience will be too much for him."

That Dorin, 22-0-1 (8), gets hit a lot, doesn't have heavy hands, isn't especially worldly in the ring, and is wholly married to the style he employs presents Gatti with the same strategic dilemma, if it's a dilemma at all, with which Gatti wrestled throughout his trilogy with Micky Ward: *If I box, I make it fairly easy. If I punch, I make it fun.* And as always, when we think about Gatti's longer-term health and what it might be like to be him in 10 or 15 years, we hope he boxes.

But no one goes to a Gatti fight to watch him box. No one cheers when he lands a jab or makes a guy miss. His boxing ability, per se, isn't what's made him a star. We'll accept that he's going to box sometimes because that's what he must do to win, as was the case with Ward. But he must stand and trade and get hit, too. That is what defines him in our hearts. Also, it's good television if he bleeds. The shot of him on his stool between rounds with the tip of one of Joe Souza's gobbed-up cotton swabs disappearing into his forehead or eyebrow is the money shot in any Gatti opera.

It's the push and pull of this internal box-or-punch struggle Gatti goes through that gets us these days, and the knowing inevitability of at least an occasional unwise choice; the second and third fights with Ward, though far less brutal than the first, both contained flat-footed exchanges in which Gatti's loved ones certainly wish he hadn't indulged. Gatti knows this and knows too, with the right opponent, how much slugging he can get away with and how much he needs to use his legs. Against Italy's light-fisted Gianluca Branco last January, he knew he needn't retreat at all. His pressure and presence alone was enough to move Branco to passivity. And against Ward's slow feet, Gatti knew he could stand in spots and deftly retreat before Ward could dig in to his body.

Indeed, you can be certain that the stewards of Gatti's career chose Dorin in large part because of his stylistic similarities to Ward. There is little fear of Dorin getting on his toes or out-speeding Gatti or anybody, and he is as far stylistically from Sharmba Mitchell, Floyd Mayweather, or, say, Ivan Robinson, as anyone could be. But because Dorin is a pressure fighter and Ward is a pressure fighter doesn't necessarily mean that they can be handled in the same way. Dorin and Ward resemble one another only in generalities, and that Gatti proved Ward's superior is no guarantee that he will prove Dorin's.

"Dorin has a lot more head movement than Ward, and he works off his defense more," said veteran journeyman and celebrated spoiler Emanuel Augustus. Augustus, of course, fought a wonderful, if losing, 10-round battle with Ward in THE RING's 2001 Fight of the Year, which more than anything propelled Ward to the Gatti fights. Augustus fought more or less on even terms with Ward until the fight's last third, when Ward's hooks to the body took over. Eight weeks later, Dorin overwhelmed Augustus, applying a steady, methodical beating on the way to winning a lopsided decision. It contained none of the life and death stuff that pervaded the Augustus-Ward match, and

while Augustus hints that other, hidden factors prevented him from doing his best work against Dorin, it's hard not to be impressed by the difference in the way the two fights played out.

"Dorin doesn't really have an offense and a defense, he just works," said Augustus, who, as one would expect, would like to meet the winner. "Against Gatti, that might be his downfall. Too much work against Gatti will hurt you. Look at the second Ward fight: Micky came out punching, punching, punching, and Gatti punched right with him and hurt him." That said, when pressed to venture a winner, Augustus leans toward Dorin. "I think Dorin stands a good chance of hurting Gatti with bodyshots. Gatti punches too wide, too wild, and I think Dorin will be able to get inside and hit him with good bodyshots. Dorin is a tough guy. People don't think a little guy can make it, but Dorin handles his business."

It is Dorin's work rate and indefatigable presence in the ring that distinguishes him most obviously from Ward. While Ward clearly was a better puncher than Dorin is (if only with the hook to the body), he could be convinced to keep his hands to himself for large stretches, either by the threat of counterpunches or, as Gatti showed, smart movement. Indeed, the well-deserved knock against Ward before his late-career winning streak unfolded was that he often went to sleep in bigger fights, refused to let his hands go. That's no worry with Dorin, who is much harder to keep outside than Ward. When the bell rings, he punches. He stops when it rings again. You get the sense he'd punch between rounds if they let him.

PHOTO BY STEVE MATTEO/HBO

Dorin has one style only, which is to continually bore in with both hands churning. This aggressive approach even worked well for him against slick-boxing Paul Spadafora, whom Dorin held to a 12-round draw in May 2003 in Spaddy's hometown of Pittsburgh. Most observers thought Dorin deserved the nod.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/HBO

Gianluca Branco drives a left hook into Gatti's ribs during their January 2004 bout in Atlantic City, which Gatti won via 12-round unanimous decision. Some experts believe Dorin's steady body attack could wear down Gatti in a grueling war of attrition.

BOXING'S GREATEST PUNCHERS

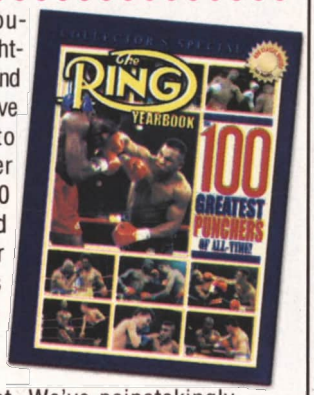

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PHOTO BY HERBIE WHYNE

Dorin ended a premature retirement in March 2004 by hammering out a fourth-round TKO of tough Chucky Tschorniawsky in Montreal (pictured). It was a decent tuneup, but Dorin will be facing a far better opponent in Gatti, who is probably the best puncher the Romanian has fought.

For all his bulldog tenacity, Dorin appeared close to a meltdown of sorts after failing to make weight for a scheduled WBA lightweight title defense in Romania last year. He somewhat bizarrely announced his immediate retirement afterward and then vanished for a time before resurfacing. It never is a good sign when a fighter retires and then as abruptly un-retires, particularly one who takes as many punches as Dorin does. You worry that the game has broken his mind and heart before his body knew it, and nothing good happens to a fighter in that state. Lou DiBella, Dorin's promoter, dismisses it.

"Dorin had been saying for a long time that he had trouble making the lightweight limit, and when he didn't make it in Romania, in front of his fans there, he was embarrassed," DiBella said. "That's all. It was a very emotional thing for him. The pressure was huge and it took a toll on him. He got back at 140 and looked great in his last fight."

Indeed, Dorin scored a rare knockout against tough Philadelphia clubfighter Chucky Tschorniawsky in Montreal in March.

Gatti is a long way from Chucky T and promises to show Dorin things he's never experienced in a ring before. For his myriad flaws and streetfighter mentality, Gatti remains a skilled, versatile fighter who has options in this fight that Dorin simply does not. He can stand and punch when he likes and move and box when he likes. He is a better puncher than anyone Dorin has faced and is a threat for as long as the fight lasts.

"The power Gatti has in his left hook will be the difference," Shields predicted. "And Gatti never loses his power. He has it late. I look for him to stop Dorin late, around the 10th or 11th round."

Shields may be right. It's not hard to envision the heavier-handed Gatti wearing down Dorin, pounding the resolve out of him, and then moving onto the next battlefield, a hero still. But to do that he must keep Dorin on the outside, a feat no one has yet been able to accomplish. Gatti won't be able to either, and not just because on some level he won't want to. Dorin will get close because he has to. Once he gets there, they both will land, and from there it's a matter of which guy's skin gives out first. The bet here is that it will be Gatti's. Dorin is better on the inside, where skulls, elbows, and hooks with both hands are worth more than is a good jab, or fast feet. It's where he lives and breathes. He'll land. A lot. More than Ward did, and more than Gatti's tender skin can abide. Call it Dorin, on cuts, by the 10th round. ■

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Aug. 1990: Chavez: His Greatness Confirmed ... Is He The Best Mexican Fighter Ever? Plus: Matthew Saad Muhammad, John L. Sullivan & Mike Tyson, Michael Nunn, Mark Breland, Harold Johnson, Cus D'Amato, Louis-Godoy (color).

Sept. 1990: Marvin Hagler—Can He Resist The Irresistible Temptation? Plus: Thomas Hearns, Sanchez-Saddler, Paul Banke, puncher vs. chin, Beau Jack, Robinson-LaMotta (color).

Nov. 1990: Tyson vs. Foreman. Can Iron Mike Stop The Blast From The Past? Plus: Bruce Seldon, best chins, Sullivan-Kilrain (color), Azumah Nelson, LaStarza.

Dec. 1990: Exclusive Annual Report: The State Of The Game. Plus: Douglas-Holyfield preview, Julio Cesar Chavez, Joe Grim, Whitaker-Nazario, Rosi-Van Horn, Benny Leonard, Douglas-Tyson (color).

Jan. 1991: Boxing's Baddest Bad Boy: Nigel Benn Plays By His Own Rules. Plus: Roberto Duran, Kid Akeem, Jose Napoles, Jimmy Carruthers, LaMotta-Zale, Dempsey-Willard (color).

Feb. 1991: Boxing On TV—Now You'll Pay! Plus: Ismael Laguna, Tommy Morrison in *Rocky V*, Reggie Tuur, Chiquita Gonzalez, Harold Green, Joe Louis.

April 1991: Julio Cesar Chavez—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Tyson-Stewart, James Leija, Wilfred Benitez, Pedro Decima, Moore-Bassey

June 1991: Pain, Frustration, Confidence, And Hope: Meldrick Taylor's Life After Chavez. Plus: Foreman-Holyfield preview, Norris-Leonard, David Kamau, Freddie Steele, Bennie Briscoe, Leonard's career (color).

July 1991: Tyson's Title Hopes: He Ain't What He Used To Be ... But It's Not Gonna Matter. Plus: Eusebio Pedroza, Myung Woo Yuh, Willie Meehan, Hearns-Hill preview, computer junior welterweight tournament, Gomez-Fenech, controversial heavyweight finishes (color).

Aug. 1991: Foreman Gives Holyfield A Fight ... And The World A Thrill (color). Plus: Making weight, Harry Greb, Kevin Kelley, Louis-Conn I, Simon Brown-Blocker, Chavez-Duplessis, Sugar Ray Robinson.

Oct. 1991: A Hit Again—How Far Can Thomas Hearns Go? Plus: Battling Levinsky, Oba Carr, Dave McAuley, Muhammad Ali, Lou Ambers, Luther McCarty, ethnic matchups, computer light heavy tournament, Cerdan-Hagler, Rocky Marciano (color).

May 1992: James Toney—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Myung Woo Yuh, Khaosai Galaxy, Rocky Graziano, Billy Soose, Roy Jones, James Warring, Duran-Chavez, Marvin Hagler (color).

July 1992: Does Larry Holmes Deserve A Title Shot? Plus: Nelson-Fenech II, Tracy Patterson, Kelley-Dorsey, fat fighters, Buchanan-Camacho, Holmes-Ali (color).

Aug. 1992: Holyfield-Holmes Prefight. Holmes: "I See Me Takin' Holyfield Outta There." Plus: Iran Barkley, Herbie Hide, George Foreman, Tex Cobb, Carnival of Champions, Harry Greb, Haugen-Mancini, Oscar De La Hoya, Gene Tunney (color).

Sept. 1992: Chavez: Unbeaten At 80-0, But What If He Had To Face These Guys? Plus: Bobby Czyz, Genaro Hernandez, Norris-Taylor, Tommy Gibbons, Sugar Ray Leonard's career, Sugar Ray Robinson (color).

Nov. 1992: Is Riddick Bowe The Next Heavyweight Champion? Plus: Morrison-Hipp, Canizales-Chandler, Chavez-Camacho preview, Australia Best of Nation, Tyson speaks from prison, Corbett-Sullivan (color), Tracy Patterson, Pat Barrett, Knockout Brown.

Feb. 1993: America's Tribute To The Brown Bomber: Joe Louis. Plus: Virgil Hill, Junior Jones, Roger Mayweather, Chicago boxing, Orlando Zulueta, Jose Napoles (color).

April 1993: Riddick Bowe—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: "Grand Slam" fight card, Toney-Barkley preview, Morris East, Joe Louis-John Henry Lewis, All-Time Top 10: Argentina, Fighters of the Year (color).

May 1993: Oscar De La Hoya's Sprint To The Title: Is He Good Enough *Now?* Plus: Carbajal-Gonzalez preview, Lennox Lewis, The Ring Poll, Freddie Pendleton.

Aug. 1994: Bowe's Back! Determined To Do It Again. Plus: Eric Griffin, Pernell Whitaker, Ray Mercer, Roger Donoghue, State of the Game (midterm report), All-Time Top 10: The Philippines.

Dec. 1994: Fighting-Mad! James Toney Just Wants To Beat People Up. Plus: Duran & Robinson, Don King, Mike McCallum, injuries (part II), Tom Molineaux.

Jan. 1995: A Puncher's Dream: Oliver McCall Upsets Boxing's Balance Of Power. Plus: Ruelas brothers, Quincy Taylor, "Unfinished Business," Dave Maier, All-Time Top 10: Canada.

May 1995: The State Of The Game. Plus: Olzubek & Arbachakov, Gonzalez-Kelley, Pazienza-Duran II, All-Time Top 10: France.

Oct. 1995 (92-Page Special): Mismatch? Don't Tell Peter McNeeley! Plus: Fights we'd like to see, Jo-el Scott, Bronco McKart, when stop fights?

Dec. 1995: Mike Tyson (vs. Peter McNeeley): The Beast Is Yet To Come. Plus: Morrison-Lewis preview, Naseem Hamed, Chiquita Gonzalez, Gaspar Ortega, 10 best chins.

Jan. 1996: King Bruno! A Hero Always ... A Winner At Last. Plus: Julio Cesar Chavez, Oscar De La Hoya, Chris Eubank, Eddie Perkins, who's hot/who's not.

Feb. 1996: Bowe's The Man (For Now), But Is He Man Enough For Tyson? Plus: Lennox Lewis, Hamed-Barrera, Paul Banke, Vince Phillips, boxing on Madison Ave., What If ... Leonard-Pryor

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Dec. 1996: Our Spin On Roy Jones. Plus: heavyweight division, Olympic recap, Luis Rodriguez, Puerto Rican fighters, Danny Hodge, Saad Muhammad.

June 1997 (Special Collector's Issue): Holyfield-Tyson II: What It Means For Now ... And Forever. Plus: Holyfield-Tyson fight poster, Naseem Hamed, computer unification, Sayers-Heenan, state of the game.

Oct. 1997: Bang! Naseem Hamed Takes Aim At America. Plus: Riddick Bowe, Phillips-Tszyu, Saman Sorjaturong, Bobby Dykes.

Nov. 1997: Is Mike Tyson Finished? Plus: Ike

Ibeabuchi, De La Hoya-Camacho preview, Frankie Conley, Hall of Fame, gloves.

Jan. 1998: Give This Man His Due! If You Can't Respect Oscar ... You Can't Respect Anyone! Plus: Sanchez-Mayweather, Morales-Zaragoza, Lucia Rijker, Marvin Johnson, characters.

Feb. 1998: Welter-Skelter! The Hottest Division In Boxing. Plus: Lewis-Golota, Olympic update, Art Shires, boxing I.Q.

March 1998 (92-Page Special): Into The Millennium With The Real Deal: The Ring's Timeline For Evander Holyfield. Plus: Hernandez-Hernandez, Briggs-Foreman, 10 champs recall "The Day I Won The Title," Johnny Thompson.

April 1998: Evander Holyfield: The Ring's Fighter Of The Year (Again!). Plus: Yory Boy Campas, Mullings-Norris, Pinkey Mitchell, Holyfield Q & A, Hamed-Kelley, Oscar De La Hoya.

July 1998: Holyfield ... Tapia ... Hamed ... Jones ... Trinidad ... De La Hoya: Who Will Be The First To Fall? Plus: Magic Johnson, Chavez-Gonzalez & Lopez-Alvarez, underappreciated boxers.

Aug. 1998: Lennox Lewis: No Holyfield, No Glory. Plus: Felix Trinidad, Pat & Mike McMurtry, Chris Byrd, unbreakable records, contenders & pretenders.

Sept. 1998 (92-Page Special): This Man's Not Unbeatable! Five Top Trainers Reveal How To Solve The Hamed Puzzle. Plus: John Tate, Freddie Norwood, Andrew Golota, Roy Jones, 12 greatest finishes.

Oct. 1998: Really Hard Punch ... Really Soft Lips: Oscar Makes Legs Quiver In And Out Of The Ring. Plus: Hector Camacho Jr., Mayweather-Hernandez preview, *Tuesday Night Fights.*

Jan. 1999: Sugar Shane Mosley: The Sweet Tradition Continues. Plus: Evander Holyfield, Julio Cesar Chavez, Erik Morales, Ray "Windmill" White.

Feb. 1999: 1999! It's Gonna Be A Great Year For Boxing. Plus: Mike Tyson, Foreman-Holmes, David Reid, Eric Morel, Richie Mitchell, quitters.

March 1999: De La Hoya vs. Quartey: Does Bazooka Have The Weapons To Shoot Down Oscar? Plus: Sugar Shane Mosley, Lopez-Alvarez II, Roy Jones, Coley Wallace.

April 1999 (92-Page Special): Fighter Of The Year: Floyd Mayweather Jr.: "He's So Good, It's Scary!" Plus: Fernando Vargas, James Page, Luisito Espinosa, Robinson-Gatti II, Archie Moore, Carlos Ortiz, 1998 diary.

May 1999: Is It All Over For Tyson? Plus: Terry Norris, Vinny Pazienza, Jesus Pimental, stoppages, mandatories.

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July 1999 (92-Page Special): The State Of The Game. Plus: Holyfield-Lewis, Felix Trinidad, Stevie Johnston, Emile Griffith, Phil Zwick.

Aug. 1999: Candidates For Greatness: Can Anyone Fill The Heavyweight Void? Plus: Tim Austin, Naseem Hamed, Oscar De La Hoya, Max Schmeling, Holyfield-Lewis.

Sept. 1999: Taking Stock In The Fight Game: Who's Hot, Who's Not. Plus: Tony Ayala, Keith Holmes, Denny & Phil Moyer, scoring.

Dec. 1999: Insiders' Analysis: Can Roy Jones Chop Down The Best Heavyweights? Plus: Ike Ibeabuchi, David Reid, David Tua, Carmen Basilio, Johnny Summerlin.

Holiday 1999 (92-Page Special): Heavyweight Showdowns! Holyfield vs. Lewis II, Grant vs. Golota. Plus: Francois Botha, Arturo Gatti, Michael Carbajal, Rocky Marciano, Lou Filippo.

Jan. 2000: What Does Trinidad's Victory Over Oscar Mean? Plus: Floyd Mayweather, Paul Spadafora, Ralph Dupas, boxing media.

March 2000: Lennox Lewis: The Champ For The Millennium ... Or Just For The Moment? Plus: Oleg Maskaev, Main Events, Derrick Jefferson, Jerry Buss, IBF scandal.

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June 2000: The Honors Keep Coming! Lenox Lewis Receives The Undisputed Ring Belt. Plus: Roy Jones, Vernon Forrest, Teddy Atlas, Mike Tyson, Don Fullmer.

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Aug. 2000: Hamed! And The Men Who Want To Kick His Naz! Plus: David Reid, James Prince, Anthony Fletcher, Micky Ward, final beatings, white hopes.

Sept. 2000: A New Look At Lennox Lewis: Is He An All-Time Great? Plus: Winky Wright, Michael Moorer, De La Hoya & Vargas, Eddie McGoorty.

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(ALL-COLOR BEGINNING WITH THE DECEMBER 2000 ISSUE)

Dec. 2000: The Hell With Tyson—Tua Is The Man Who Could Beat Lewis. Plus: Mike Tyson, Felix Trinidad, Wladimir Klitschko, Trilla in Manila, U.S. vs. World, Toxey Hall.

Jan. 2001 (108-Page Extra): Trinidad's Destiny: Jones Is On His Mind ... But Vargas Is In His Face! Plus: Naseem Hamed, Tszyu-Judah, Evander Holyfield, Willie Bean, 20 greatest middleweights.

Feb. 2001: It's Not Over For Oscar: The Ring's Five-Step Recovery Plan. Plus: Bob Arum, Dingaan Thobela, Hernandez brothers, U.S. Olympic team, future pound-for-pounders.

March 2001 (108-Page Extra): Tyson! Forget About Retirement ... A Title Shot Awaits! Plus: Ayala-Tapia II, Audley Harrison, Chris Byrd, Kirk Johnson, Julio Cesar Chavez, Boone Kirkman, 12 most exciting rounds.

April 2001: A New Beginning ... A New Middle: Felix Trinidad Is Ready To Conquer Another Division! Plus: Shane Mosley, Lennox Lewis, Paul Andrews, boxing business.

May 2001 (108-Page Extra): Felix Trinidad—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, Barrera-Hamed preview, Bernard Hopkins, Joey Archer.

June 2001: Pretty Boy Floyd: Superstar Or Superbrat? Plus: Lewis vs. greats, 2000 Olympians, Henry Hall, rematches we'd like to see.

July 2001 (108-Page Extra): The State Of The Game. Plus: Zab Judah, John Ruiz, Andrew Lewis, Mark Johnson, British boxing.

Aug. 2001: Rocking The World! What Rahman's Victory Means To Boxing. Plus: Barrera-Hamed, Oscar De La Hoya, Mount Whitaker, *Friday Night Fights.*

Sept. 2001 (108-Page Extra): Exclusive Ring Interview—Hasim Rahman: "Nobody's Taking My Titles!" Plus: 20 all-time greatest lightweights, Pat Valentino, Hopkins & King, Jones & Arum.

Oct. 2001: Trinidad vs. Hopkins: Middleweight Unification Superfight Analysis & Predictions. Plus: Emanuel Steward, Joe Calzaghe, Ali's opponents, Rahman & King.

Dec. 2001: The Rock Promises Another Shock! "I'm Gonna Knock Lennox Out Again!" Plus: David Reid, Jones-Gonzalez, McCline-Grant, Jackie Graves, ring deaths.

Jan. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Oscar Feeds His Critics: Did He Chicken Out Against Vargas? Plus: Wladimir Klitschko, Chris Byrd, 20 greatest featherweights, "Caveman" Bob Moha.

March 2002 (108-Page Extra): Is Tyson Ready To Regain The Title? Plus: Kostya Tszyu, Floyd Mayweather, Bernard Hopkins, Eddie Futch, fitness, ahead for 2002.

May 2002 (108-Page Extra): Bernard Hopkins—Fighter Of The Year. Plus: Year-end awards, Holyfield-Ruiz III, 2000 Olympians, Eric Harding, "Silent" Hairston.

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Aug. 2002: Lewis vs. Tyson: Who Will Win ... And What Happens Next. Plus: Michael Moorer, Jeff Fenech, Charley Parham, Rafael & Juan Manuel Marquez.

Sept. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Vernon Forrest—Next Step In The Master Plan: End Mosley's Career. Plus: Sugar Ray Leonard, Roberto Duran, Ricardo Mayorga, 20 greatest lightweights.

Oct. 2002: Tito' Back ... And He's "Going To Make Hopkins Pay!" Plus: Ward-Gatti, Bouie Fisher, controversial scoring, ruining prospects.

Nov. 2002 (108-Page Extra): Monster Mashed! Can A New Tyson Emerge From The Rubble? Plus: The Ring 100, Evander Holyfield, Don King, Billy Joiner, junior welters.

Jan. 2003 (108-Page Extra): The Golden Boy Proves His Manhood: Is Oscar De La Hoya' Prime Just Beginning? Plus: Michael Grant, David Tua, previews of Morales-Ayala and Ward-Gatti II, overrated/underrated.

Feb. 2003: The Resurrection Of A Warrior: Cam Evander Holyfield Recapture The Glory Of His Youth? Also: Floyd Mayweather Sr., Nate Campbell, Tom & Peter McNeeley, boxing finances, pound-for-pound.

March 2003 (108-Page Extra): Hamed ... Morales ... Tapia: Barrera Has Punched His Ticket To The Hall Of Fame. Also: Joe Mesi, Ricardo Lopez, Pipino Cuevas, alphabet tales, what's ahead for '03.

April 2003: Gatti Has His Ducks In A Row: A New Woman And A New Trainer Put The "Art" Back In Arturo. Also: Barrera-Morales, Roy Jones, Phillip Ndou & Silence Mabuza, Laila Ali, Gorilla Jones.

May 2003 (108-Page Extra): Ali ... Leonard ... Tyson ... Klitschko? Also: Year-end awards, Chris Byrd, Lupe Pintor, Maxie Rosenbloom.

June 2003: Exclusive! The Ring Grills George Foreman. Also: Kostya Tszyu, Ricardo Mayorga, Diego Corrales, Tommy Loughran.

July 2003 (108-Page Extra): Now What, Roy? How Jones Matches Up Against The Heavyweight Elite. Also: Mike Tyson, Marquez Brothers, Ricardo Williams, Tony Zale.

Aug. 2003: The Ring Unscrambles The Heavyweight Mess. Also: Bernard Hopkins, Scott Harrison, Billy Warren, Latino revolution, cups.

Sept. 2003 (108-Page Extra): Oscar At 30: Forget About Retirement ... He Has Revenge On His Mind. Also: Mayorga-Forrest II preview, James Toney, Barney Ross, HBO, report cards.

Oct. 2003: James Toney vs. Bernard Hopkins: The Ghost Of Superfights Past. Also: De La Hoya-Mosley II preview, Jermain Taylor, Sharmba Mitchell, biggest hearts.

Nov. 2003 (108-Page Extra): Healing And Hungry: Vitali Klitschko—Is He The Man To Retire Lewis? Also: Gatti-Ward III, Holyfield-Toney, Dominick Guinn, Lee Roy Murphy, The Ring 100.

Jan. 2004 (108-Page Extra): Shane-Oscar II: The 10 Questions You Want Answered! Also: Laila Ali, Mark Johnson, Jimmy McClarnin, The Ring championship, broke boxers, division-by-division analysis.

March 2004 (108-Page Extra): Audley Harrison, Dominick Guinn, Joe Mesi: Who Will Be The Next Star Heavyweight? Also: Floyd Mayweather, Arturo Gatti, Erik Morales, what's ahead for 2004.

April 2004: Antonio Tarver: "It's Not About Roy Jones Anymore." Also: Pacquiao-Barrera, Floyd Mayweather, all punch/no chin, Rinty Monaghan.

May 2004 (108-Page Extra): James Toney—Fighter Of The Year. Also: Year-end awards, Mosley-Wright preview, King's "Night Of The Undisputed," boxing politicians.

June 2004: The Lewis Retirment: Will He Come Back? Also: Scott Pemberton, Jones-Tarver preview, James McGirt, James J. Braddock.

July 2004 (100-Page Extra): The State Of The Game. Also: Erik Morales, Howard Eastman, Marco Antonio Barrera, Hank Hankinson, middleweights.

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BELTING PAC-MAN IN THE PHILIPPINES

Bringing Honor To A World Champion A World Away

PHOTO COURTESY OF MALACANANG PALACE

Philippines President Gloria Arroyo, Manila Mayor Lito Atienza, featherweight champion Manny Pacquiao, and Editor-in-Chief Nigel Collins during the historic "belting" ceremony at Malacanang Palace. Pacquiao earned the belt by defeating Marco Antonio Barrera last November.

In March, Editor-in-Chief Nigel Collins set forth on a day-long passage to the Philippines to present world featherweight champion Manny Pacquiao THE RING *belt he earned by knocking out Marco Antonio Barrera in November 2003. Collins has been on the boxing beat for more than 30 years, and he's been around, but what he found in this island nation of 80 million was unlike anything he had ever experienced before. What follows is his first-person account.*

By Nigel Collins

They kicked the zombies out of Manila's North Cemetery so I could visit Pancho Villa's grave. But that was just one event in a series of surreal occurrences that marked a marvelously madcap trip to the Philippines, a magical land where boxing is still front-page news and Manny Pacquiao is an even bigger star than Oscar De La Hoya is in the United States.

The chief purpose of my visit to the Philippines was to present Pacquiao with THE RING featherweight championship belt. I also wanted to pay homage to Filipino ring legends Villa and Gabriel "Flash" Elorde. But the trip quickly turned into an over-the-top production, and less than five minutes after the plane landed at Ninoy Aquino International Airport, I was muttering to myself what would quickly become my mantra for the entire visit:

I can't believe this is happening!

My first hint that I wasn't in Las Vegas or Atlantic City anymore was when I was whisked through customs and escorted to the VIP lounge while somebody fetched my luggage. Meanwhile, the video crew that would shadow me throughout the week documented every move. Except for the TV camera, this must have been how it was for Nat Fleischer in the 1950s and '60s, back when the founder and first editor of THE RING toured Asia. For me, however, it was a unique experience, unprecedented in my two terms as editor-in-chief. In a little more than a week in the Philippines, THE RING garnered as much media attention as it would normally receive during a year in the United States.

I should hasten to add that none of the hoopla that surrounded my visit had any-

In Fleischer's footsteps: Founder and first editor of THE RING Nat Fleischer shakes hands with Philippines President Ramon Magsaysay during a 1956 visit.

thing to do with me personally. True, THE RING name still has a certain cachet and I was its representative, but it was Pacquiao's tremendous popularity, unparalleled in his homeland since Elorde held the junior lightweight title in the 1960s, together with the unique character of the country and its inhabitants, that combined to create such an extraordinary happening.

Fueling the buzz was the fact that there was a general election coming up, and every politician wanted Pacquiao in his or her corner. It only made sense. But regardless of any ulterior motives, the Filipinos more than lived up to their reputation as being among the friendliest and most hospitable people in the world. And there's no denying the genuine pride and affection for Pacquiao that's shared by poor and powerful alike.

The man who set the wheels in motion for the trip and did most of the legwork was Ted Lerner, THE RING's Philippines correspondent, who has lived there for more than 10 years. Although the story soon took on a life of its own, Lerner somehow managed to maintain a loose grip on the proceedings as the media caravan careened through Metro Manila the next several days en route to the climactic "belting" ceremony at Malacanang Palace. It was an unforgettable ride.

Everything is so exaggerated in the Philippines, going there is like stepping into the pages of a comic book. But if you can abandon yourself to that zany spirit, it is an exhilarating experience; you just have to go with the flow and savor the culture in all its beauty and craziness.

Metro Manila is a teeming caldron of approximately 10 million people, and life bubbles over onto the streets in dazzling diversity. The Filipinos are a nation of entrepreneurs, and people set up shop wherever there's available space: on the sidewalks, in the street, wherever they can find a spot to do their thing. It's all about survival. You'll see a vendor frying fish balls right next to another cooking corn on the cob, and a few yards down the road a couple of guys will be fixing transmissions on the sidewalk. Moneychangers and girlie bars are everywhere, and everybody is selling something or another. No wonder a freewheeling enterprise such as professional boxing has flourished there since the early years of the 20th century.

As guests of Manila Mayor Lito

PHOTO BY TED LERNER

The Elorde Sports Center features an eclectic mix of events

Atienza, we were headquartered at the magisterial Manila Hotel, a distinction shared with General Douglas MacArthur, who was bivouacked there during his stint as commander of U.S. armed forces in the Far East in the 1940s. Even though the smiling guards at the gate wield sawed-off shotguns, the Manila Hotel still exudes old-world charm and is a relative oasis of serenity in a city bursting with hyperactivity.

The golden era of Philippine boxing was the 1960s, when Elorde held the 130-pound title for more than seven years. His title-winning bout against Harold Gomes at Araneta Coliseum (15 years later the site of "The Thrilla In Manila") drew a crowd of 36,402. Elorde, along with Villa, is one of only two Philippine boxers enshrined in the International Boxing Hall of Fame, and by all accounts he was a wonderful human being, beloved by all, even by many of his ring victims *(see sidebar, page 58)*.

Driving through Sucat the day after my arrival, it's hard to believe that it was cattle-grazing country when Elorde purchased a piece of property there with his ring earnings. These days urban sprawl has made Sucat pretty much indistinguishable from any other part of Metro Manila. But the Elorde Sports Center is still an intrinsic part of the neighborhood, featuring an eclectic mix of boxing, cockfights, billiards, ballroom dancing, and swimming.

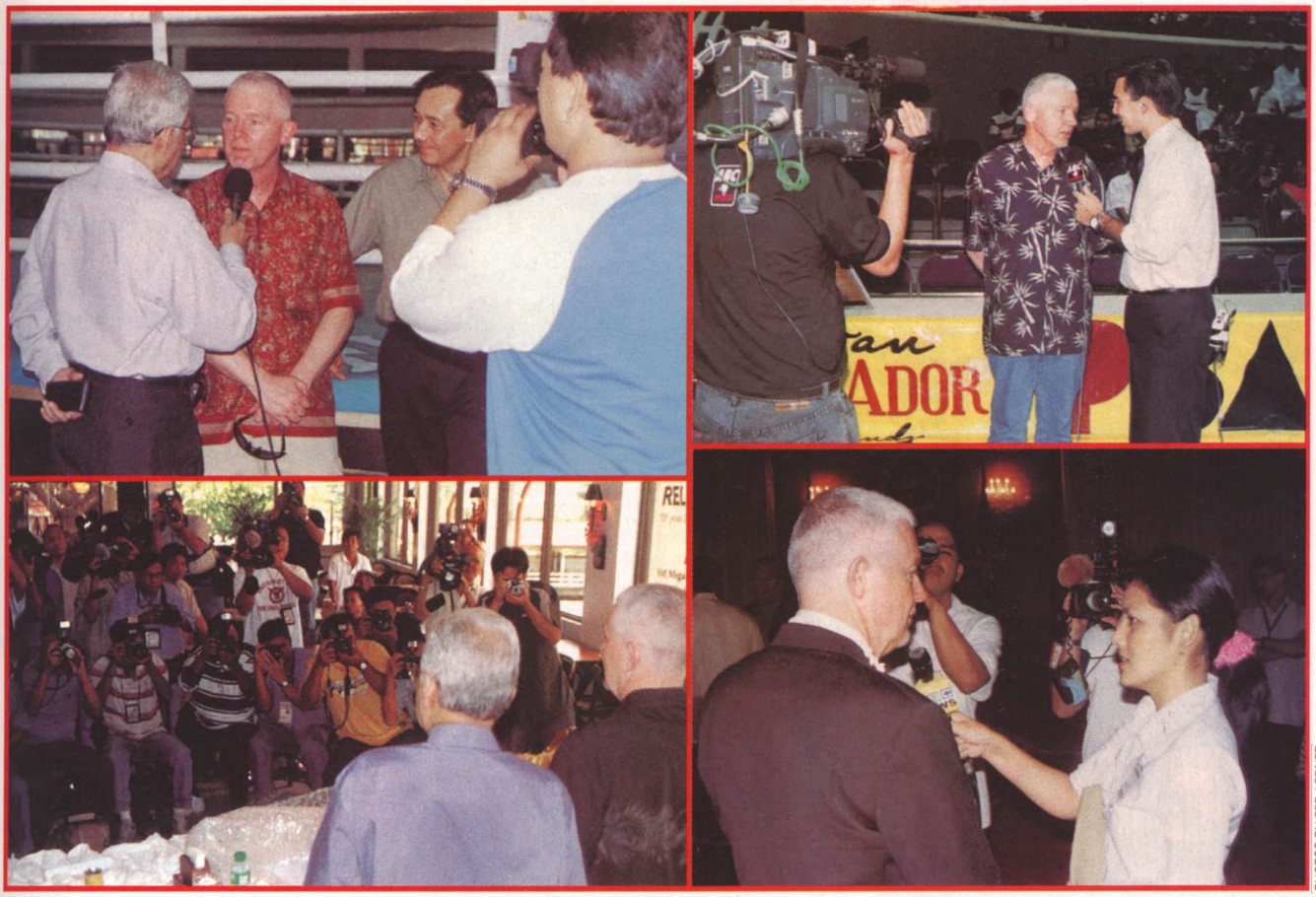
Young men who want to become boxers are welcomed into the Elorde fold. They are fed, housed in an on-site dormitory, and taught to box at their gym. All of this is free, providing the boxer works hard at his craft and helps with chores around the complex. In a country with no social safety net, such a program is a godsend. But it's not just boxers the Elorde family is helping. The overall operation requires all sorts of employees, and it's no exaggeration to say that Elorde is still giving back to the community almost two decades after his death.

Lunch with Elorde's widow, Laura, along with other clan members and friends, was a special treat. The Elordes are still very much the First Family of Philippine boxing, and three of Flash's sons, Bebot, Johnny, and Marty, promote and/or manage. After lunch we drove to Manila Memorial Park to place a floral tribute at Flash's tomb. Our tiny graveside gathering brought together people from two different cultures, divided by thousands of miles but united by the common bond of boxing. It was the sort of moment that reminds you how righteous the Sweet Science can be when practiced by a man of Elorde's enduring class and character.

The senses are continually bombarded with the jarring juxtaposition of life in the Philippines. And I went from the poignancy of visiting Flash's final resting place to the visceral world of the "sabong" (or cockfights) in the time it took to drive a few blocks. Cockfighting is the Filipinos' national pastime and is essential to the financial well-being of the Elorde Sports Center. I lasted almost an hour, which was long enough to see about 10 chickens meet their fate. Roy Jones would have loved it, but I probably won't go again.

PHOTO BY AURORA LERNER

Gathering at Flash's tomb: Jane and (referee) Ferdie Estrella, journalist Ronnie Nathanielsz, Laura Elorde, journalist Quinito Henson (behind Mrs. Elorde), Marty Elorde, Collins, and Ted Lerner.



PHOTOS BY TED LERNER

The media circus, Manila style

The next stop on that memorable Saturday afternoon was the Wild Card Gym. Not the one in Hollywood run by Pacquiao's trainer Freddie Roach, of course, but a new state-of-the art facility in Sucat, which is named after the original. The gym is owned by Rod Nazario, Pacquiao's business manager. Pac-Man's brother, Bobby Pacquiao, was there, busy prepping for an upcoming defense of the Philippine super featherweight title. Manny, however, was still in Davao City on the island of Mindanao (the Philippines is made up of more than 7,000 islands), which quickly became a subject of consternation.

Pacquiao was supposed to already be training for his May 8 bout with Juan Manuel Marquez, but there were suspicions that the featherweight champion was otherwise engaged.

"I called him on his cell phone, and I could hear the pool balls clicking in the background," said irate journalist Ronnie Nathanielsz, who produces sports documentaries for Viva Entertainment and writes for the *Manila Standard*.

Nathanielsz has covered Pacquiao since his preliminary days and has an obvious affection for him. Still, he pulled no punches in his next column, writing that he was "... dismayed by the behavior of the brash young man from General Santos City who has been losing big money at pool tables to regular hustlers, spending long hours and late nights instead of training."

The media blitz began in earnest Monday morning with a press luncheon, hosted by Ali Atienza, the mayor's son and chairman of the Manila Sports Council. When THE RING belt was displayed, you would have thought it was the Holy Grail. The photographers surged forward en masse, strobes blazing. The next morning, photos of the belt were plastered all over the newspapers, and you couldn't help but wonder how long the alphabet gangs would survive if THE RING's championship policy received this sort of coverage in the United States.

After the press conference, Nathanielsz took us back to his office and showed tapes of Pacquiao's early fights. If you think Pac-Man is reckless now, you should have seen him when he first turned pro. Raw, wild, and usually leading with his chin, the teenage

PHOTO BY TED LERNER

The irrepressible Ronnie Nathanielsz

PHOTOS BY TED LERNER

The band plays at Manila City Hall as the fans wait for Pacquiao

Pacquiao overcame his deficits with boundless enthusiasm, backed up with a paralyzing punch. It was easy to understand why Filipino fans loved him from the start.

The following day I was a guest at the monthly Philippine Sportswriters Association Forum, along with Nazario and Celso Dayrit, president of the Philippine Olympic Committee. There are at least 20 daily newspapers published in Manila, which prompts fierce competition and a style of reportage that frequently veers toward sensationalism. The headline "Ring Editor Warns Pacquiao: Be Sharp For Marquez Or Else" had already appeared in one paper, but on this occasion most of the serious grilling was directed at Dayrit.

From the PSA Forum at the swank Manila Pavilion, we segued to the seedy Sampaloc area, location of the fabled L & M Gym. Lerner had written a "Being There" installment about the L & M for the May 2004 issue of THE RING EXTRA, so I had a pretty good idea of what to expect, but this third-world sweatshop is even grimier in person than on the printed page.

While a dozen or so fighters toiled in a sweltering, airless room akin to a torture chamber, we joined the taciturn Nazario (clearly the Alpha male of Philippine boxing), giggling gym proprietor Moi Lainez, gofer Jerry Garcia (honest), the ubiquitous Nathanielsz, and several others in the air-conditioned office.

Sitting alone at a small desk in the corner was Erbing Jardenil, an ancient matchmaker who thumbed through a tiny, tattered notebook, a worried look on his wizened face, presumably trying to find the right pairings for an upcoming card. A couple of dusty trophies sat on the floor, a few faded photographs hung on the walls. Typically, none of the regulars in the office seemed to be paying any attention to the fighters visible on the other side of the window that divided them from the gym.

We still hadn't seen Pacquiao, but Nazario assured us he was flying in from Mindanao that evening and would be on hand for the next day's festivities. Besides playing pool, the champ's arrival had been delayed when his wife's uncle was killed in a road accident. Like most famous fighters, Pacquiao is being pulled in 10 different directions at the same time, and everybody in the boxing community knew that the sooner he got out of the Philippines and into Roach's care the better. But before leaving for California, Pacquiao had a date with Philippine President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo and me at the palace. Tomorrow was the big day.

The first order of business Wednesday morning, however, was a courtesy call at Manila City Hall. Lerner had told me that Mayor Atienza had been a RING reader since boyhood, so I knew we had something in common, but was unprepared for the mind-blowing reception that greeted us. The moment our van came to a halt and the door slid open, a 30-piece band began to play. It was all starting to seem like a movie.

As we stood in the sunny courtyard listening to a spirited selection of vaguely familiar tunes, another vehicle rolled up, and out stepped Pacquiao. Suddenly, there were people everywhere. "Manny! ... Manny!" they screamed, rushing forward in an attempt to get a glimpse of their idol. We were quickly escorted inside, up a flight of stairs, and into a crowded reception room, where Mayor Atienza, his son, Ali, and a gathering of perhaps 100 people awaited. After some brief remarks by the mayor, I was presented with the key to the city.

"This key will open all doors in Manila, even the bank—if you care to invest," said Atienza, a well-practiced smile on his face.

Did he really think boxing writers have money to invest?

Word had filtered down that President

PHOTO BY TED LERNER

Mayor Atienza presents Collins with the key to the City of Manila as Rod Nazario and Pacquiao look on

Arroyo would not wait if we were late, so there was a mad dash down the stairs, through a mob of fans, and back into the van. With the mayor's vehicle in the lead, our small motorcade roared off behind a motorcycle escort, which immediately disappeared into traffic, leaving us to fend for ourselves. But thanks to our faithful driver, Boy (that's a name in the Philippines, not an indicator of age or a pejorative), we made it to the palace on time.

Once inside the beautiful Malacanang Palace, we were briefed on protocol as other guests and the media arrived, and a few minutes later I was in the receiving line shaking hands with a beaming President Arroyo. Soon it was time for the "belting," a term I first heard from Hermie Rivera, the former manager of former WBA bantamweight and WBC featherweight titleholder Luisito Espinosa, who now works for the Office of the Press Secretary and was our entree to Malacanang.

PHOTO BY AURORA LERNER

Sharing a laugh with Jorge Araneta

After an introduction from Nathanielsz and opening remarks by Mayor Atienza, I strapped the belt around Pacquiao's waist. Then, as I raised his left arm in the traditional victory pose, Pacquiao raised President Arroyo's arm, a gesture that was intended as a sign that he was supporting her bid for another term in office.

All of life is so interwoven in the Philippines it's almost impossible not to get caught up in its web of political intrigue. For instance, Nazario's wife, Justice Minita Chico-Nazario, had been recently nominated to the Supreme Court, only to have her nomination recalled amid allegations that she had originally gotten it through what *The Philippine Daily Star* called the "Pacquiao connection."

Still, politics aside, it's not often the leader of a country takes a positive interest in boxing, and it was gratifying to see the sport honored in such an opulent setting. Nobody puts on a "belting" like the Filipinos.

Later in the day we struggled though a monumental traffic jam to Quezon City

PHOTOS BY TED LERNER

Collins and Emmanuel R. Sison, secretary to Mayor Atienza, at Pancho Villa's refurbished tomb. The plaque is in Tagalog, the official language of the Philippines.

(one of the 11 cities that make up Metro Manila) for a late-afternoon get-together with one of the Philippines' leading captains of industry, Jorge Araneta, owner of the Araneta Coliseum.

Araneta, a slender, ethereal-looking man, received us in his penthouse office, which afforded a panoramic view of the city just as the setting sun turned the sky a brilliant orange. It was Araneta's arena, of course, that hosted the legendary Thrilla in 1975. He's maintained a keen interest in the sport throughout the ensuing decades, and spoke enthusiastically of Pacquiao and lamented the passing of big-time boxing at the Araneta Coliseum, which these days is the home of basketball, beauty pageants, and other forms of popular entertainment.

Nevertheless, when Nathanielsz suggested that perhaps he should become the business manager of a hot young prospect he knew of, Araneta smiled and said, "Why not?" So perhaps Araneta's formal involvement in boxing is not over. His roots go back to the days when five-figure boxing crowds at the Coliseum were routine, and if anybody has the juice and financial wherewithal to bring big-time boxing back to the Philippines, it's Araneta.

In the meantime, the best Filipino fighters, like Pacquiao and so many others before him, will have to go to the United States to earn big money. It seems a cruel irony that fighters from a country that loves boxing have to travel to one where the sport has been reduced to a cult status in order to maximize their earning potential. But facts are facts, and there's no escaping the harsh economic reality that the average annual income for a Filipino is roughly $1,030.

GOMES "FLASH" BACK

Harold Gomes can't call to mind anything about his first fight with Gabriel "Flash" Elorde, other than the sensation that he resembled a famous toy.

"I don't remember much about that fight except that I was up and down like a yo-yo," said Gomes, 70, of the savage beating he received at the hands of the legendary Filipino fighter on March 16, 1960, in Quezon City.

Gomes came to the Philippines with the world junior lightweight title and was promptly smashed by Elorde, who knocked down the Portuguese-American seven times before the fight was mercifully stopped in the seventh round.

After such a humiliating defeat, and a subsequent first-round kayo in their return bout five months later in San Francisco, Gomes could be forgiven for not wanting to ever return to the Philippines. Exactly 44 years later, however, he ignored U.S. government travel warnings and did just that. And again he was floored. This time, though, it wasn't pulverizing hooks and stinging straight lefts that caught him by surprise. It was the reception of the Filipino people.

Gomes was the guest of honor at the fourth annual Gabriel "Flash" Elorde Boxing Awards Night, which is held in Manila every March 25, Elorde's birthday. The event is staged by the Elorde family to honor the best in Philippine boxing and to keep alive the memory of Flash, who died of lung cancer in 1986. Each year the family flies over one of Elorde's former opponents.

It's one of the great mysteries of sport, how two men can engage in near-mortal combat, then form a lifelong bond that few who have never stepped inside the ring could begin to understand.

"I have a lot of respect for Elorde," said Gomes, who also visited the tomb of Elorde in suburban Manila, where he kneeled and prayed. "He was a great fighter and a great guy, a family man. I came all the way across the ocean to pay respects to this man and to be with the family of Flash."

PHOTO BY TED LERNER

Gomes and Mrs. Elorde pay their respects to Flash

Like every opponent of Elorde, Gomes became friends with the great Filipino and his family. This was common practice for Elorde, who in the Philippines is revered as much for his gentlemanly and humble ways as he is for his boxing prowess. Elorde formed a close bond with every opponent he ever fought. The large family has carried on the tradition of friendliness and hospitality.

"It's very important to us," said Elorde's widow, Laura. "Flash always made friends with his opponents. All of them came over to the house for dinner after the fights."

Mrs. Elorde once stayed with the Gomeses in the 1980s at their Rhode Island home. Gomes even trained an Elorde boxer, Rolando Bohol.

In Manila, Gomes, who brought his wife, two children, and grandchildren with him, was greeted like a celebrity at every turn. The Elorde family threw a dinner in his honor. His picture appeared in every newspaper. Wherever he went in Manila, fans sought him out for his autograph and photo. His grandson even became friends with many of Elorde's grandkids.

At the awards, the audience greeted him with a standing ovation. Gomes looked like he was in shock, perhaps more stunned by what happened now than 44 years ago.

"The reception has been great," he said in awe. "It's unbelievable. When you retire you think it's all over. I never thought that after losing the fight, they'd recognize me after me all these years. I only wish the Flash could be here tonight."

—Ted Lerner

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By now you're probably wondering what happened to the zombies. Well, originally, I thought that visiting Villa's grave would be a relatively simple act. But it seems that the old flyweight champ's final resting place had fallen into disrepair since he died in 1925, and the City of Manila wanted to fix it up before I paid my respects.

The restoration was finally finished, and the day after "belting" Pacquiao, we set off early, picking up a floral wreath on our way. I also purchased a number of newspapers, and couldn't help but notice a front-page story in one of the tabloids headlined, "Zombies Evicted From Manila's North Cemetery."

It turned out that these were not the living dead of Haitian and Hollywood fame, but rather homeless people who were living in the cemetery. Admittedly, nowhere in the article did it mention that they were being expelled on my behalf, but considering the great length the city had already gone to in preparation of my visit, I'm pretty sure it wasn't a coincidence.

The surrealism reached new heights when we spotted a banner stretched across the top of the gate welcoming me to the cemetery. I just hoped nobody expected me to join Pancho as a perpetual guest.

Waiting for us at Villa's now immaculate tomb were Emmanuel R. Sison, secretary to the mayor, several other city employees, a small crowd of about 50 onlookers, Nathanielsz and his camera crew, and, believe it or not, another band.

Villa was looking better than he had in decades. The life-size bust that sits in front of his tomb had been spruced up, but they'd used a shade of paint that made him look like a white guy. Still, it was the thought that counted, and the considerable effort the city went to was touching. If nothing else was accomplished by my visit to the Philippines, it was good to know that I'd helped resurrect the memory of Asia's first world champion.

With the final official act completed, we headed for Angeles City, a few hours drive outside of Manila, where Lerner lives with his wife, Aurora, and their daughter, Shanti. It was good to be off-duty for a few days, but as I had an early-morning fight home, we all returned to the Manila Hotel for my final night in the Philippines. I was half asleep in front of the TV when a face on the screen jolted me awake.

"That's Carlos Padilla!" I yelped as the man who refereed The Thrilla in Manila broke up a tussle between two housewives over a bottle of rubbing alcohol.

"Take it easy, ladies," crooned Padilla. "There's plenty for everybody."

"They've been running that commercial for years," said Lerner. "I think he made it soon after the fight."

Padilla's commercial was the final boxing-related episode of my Philippines sojourn. A few hours later I was on a jet headed home, the past eight days tumbling around my brain like socks in a dryer. Originally, I'd been a little worried about displacing the zombies, but Lerner assured me they'd probably be back living in the cemetery long before my plane reached the shores of America. ■

KID GLOVES

A Look At The Second-Generation Phenomenon

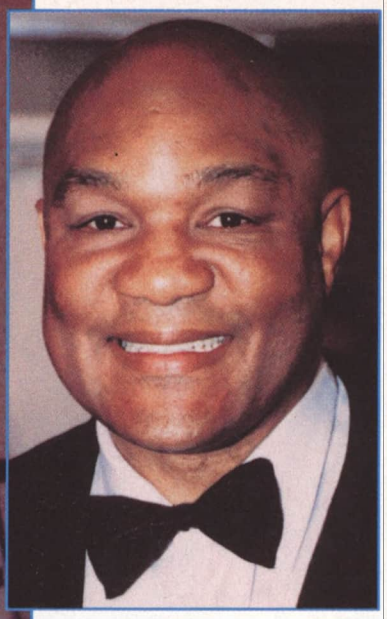
By Don Stradley

Who could blame a famous fighter for not wanting their son or daughter to fight professionally? Who would willingly expose their children to Don King and the alphabet gangs, not to mention head trauma and blurred vision? George Foreman offered to match the $15,000 his daughter Freeda was earning for her boxing debut, if only she'd stay out of the ring. Even a tough guy like Joey Giardello wasn't prepared for how nervous he was when his son Paul took up boxing. The youngster won his first four fights, but retired to appease his father's nerves.

PHOTO BY JOHNNY NUNEZ/WIRE IMAGE

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

It's no longer just sons who try to emulate their fighting fathers. Today, daughters such as Laila Ali, pictured taking a playful poke at her pop (above), are also part of the boxing offspring set. Among the sons keeping up the tradition is junior welterweight Julio Cesar Chavez Jr., shaking hands with his Hall of Fame-bound father (right).



Freeda Foreman, daughter of Big George, turned down her father's offer to match her purse if she didn't fight, and went ahead and turned pro. Freeda went 5-1 (3) as a middleweight, but hasn't fought since November 2001, when she suffered her only defeat.

That's why it's such a surprise to see so many second-generation fighters making their ring debuts in recent months.

Take a look at some recent fight results from around the world and you'll see such names as Chavez, Duran, Hearns, and McGirt. Factor in women's boxing where the names Frazier, Ali, and Johansson might appear, and it seems the number of second-generation fighters is at an all-time high.

The offspring of any famous father has difficulty matching their dad's achievements. Just think of Frank Sinatra Jr. or Lisa Marie Presley. But the children of former boxing champions have it especially hard when they follow their dads into the ring. Not only have fighters traditionally steered their children away from the sport, but it's also a long held belief that while most great fighters come from poor backgrounds, their children are brought up in much better conditions thanks to their dad's successes in the ring. In other words, the children of millionaires aren't likely to be bad-assed brawlers. But sometimes a child develops a genuine interest in the sport and can't be dissuaded. When Thomas Hearns' son took up boxing, "The Hit Man" had some doubts.

"At first, I was very hesitant about it because I know how tough it is on a person's body," said the elder Hearns. "He's old enough to make up his own mind with what he wants to do with his life. I'm just happy to see him mature into a man."

Ronald Hearns made his professional debut at the Joe Louis Arena in Detroit where his father had so many memorable nights. He had an easy time stopping Alex Black in one round.

"I know the expectations are much higher for me because I'm the son of a legend," he said. "I try not to listen to what people have to say or worry about them comparing me to him. I'm just worrying about being the best fighter I can possibly be."

Roberto Duran Jr. has an even bigger reputation to live up to.

"A lot of people in Panama are waiting to see what I can do in this sport," he said. "Time will decide if I did things right or wrong."

"I have always enjoyed boxing since I was a kid," Duran Jr. told *The Miami Herald*. "My father didn't help me develop, because he never wanted me to be a fighter. I would train behind his back."

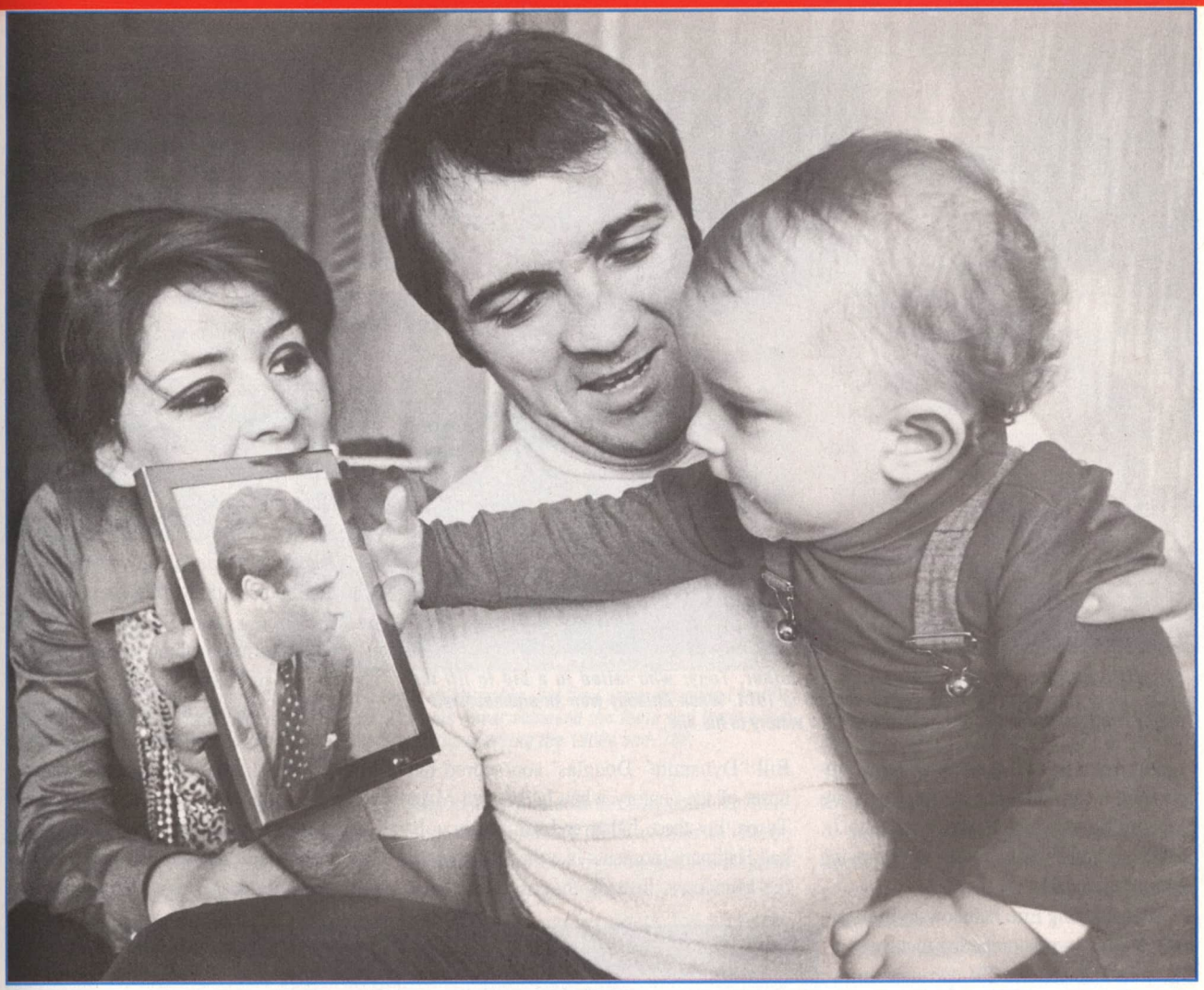
Duran Jr. followed his sister, Irichelle, also a boxer, to one of her fights in South Africa. After his sister's scheduled bout was canceled, the promoter placed Duran Jr. on the card. He won a four-round decision over Banda Mathebula.

"When we returned to Panama, my father didn't want to talk to me," said Duran Jr. "Fortunately, he later accepted my decision and now totally respects what I am doing."

Even though the sons of Hearns and Duran finally have their fathers' blessings, being the son of a famous fighter doesn't guarantee you'll win titles or make a lot of money. Bob Fitzsimmons and Archie Moore had children who tried boxing without much success. Billy Papke, known for his bloody battles with Stanley Ketchel, watched his son flounder in the ring. Papke Jr. seemed to have his dad's punch—most of his wins came by knockout—but retired with a record of 8-6.

One of the few second-generation fighters to do well was Marcel Cerdan Jr. Fighting almost exclusively in Paris, Cerdan Jr. had a respectable record of 49-3-2 (16). French boxing fans loved Cerdan Jr. because he was the spitting image of his legendary dad, even if losses to journeymen Clyde Gray and Donato Puduano suggest he lacked his dad's skills. In 1983, Cerdan Jr. was cast in the role of his father in *Edith And Marcel*, a French film about his father's romance

Just because you look like your old man, it doesn't mean you can fight like him. Former middleweight champion Billy Papke poses with his son, Billy Jr., in 1930. The old champ hoped his kid would also win a title, but the younger Papke's career soon fizzled out and he retired after just 14 fights.



Marcel Cerdan Jr. shows his son, Nicolas, a photo of his famous grandfather, the former middleweight champion of the world. Marcel Jr. had a pretty decent pro career in the 1960s, but never equaled the feats of the family patriarch.

with singer Edith Piaf. Much of Cerdan Jr.'s career was about paying tribute to his dad. That seems to be the driving force behind many fighters' offspring.

After a childhood spent reading a family scrapbook devoted to his dad's ring career, Ray Mancini announced his plans to become a boxer. He met the usual resistance from his dad, Lenny.

"He told me it was a tough life," said Ray. "But what could he say when I told him I wanted to win the title for him?"

Thanks partly to the managerial savvy of Dave Wolf, Ray Mancini's career skyrocketed during the early-'80s, inspiring a made-for-TV movie in 1985 and a song by Warren Zevon. The Mancini mania would have been too saccharine if not for Ray himself, who was never in a boring fight. When he finally captured the WBA title by defeating Art Frias in a one-round war, Mancini said simply, "I've served my purpose."

More recently, Australia's Anthony Mundine took a page from the Mancini book. Mundine's dad, Tony, failed in a bid to win the middleweight title from Carlos Monzon in 1974. Anthony chucked a promising rugby career to pursue boxing, vowing to win a title for his dad. He achieved his dream last year when he outpointed Antwun Echols for an alphabet version of the super middleweight title.

According to Anthony, "The first words I said to him was, 'This is for you, Dad.' And we just both broke out in tears, man. It was a joyful moment, you know."

Mancini and Mundine had an advantage in that their dads had been out of the public eye for many years. Therefore, there weren't a lot of expectations to live up to. For Laila Ali, having a world-renowned daddy was a mixed blessing.

"Well, my name is always gonna open doors," Laila said. "I can't help that, and of course I'm gonna walk through them. I'm gonna get paid more, of course, and I'm gonna get more attention, but a lot of responsibility comes with that. Not everybody could handle what I go through."

When Leon Spinks was living a wild and woolly lifestyle that gave Richard Pryor fodder for his comedy routines, nobody would have guessed that Leon's son would grow up to be welterweight champion of the world. Cory Spinks knows that having a famous dad makes opponents come at him harder than they normally would because they want to a victory over his famous name.

"I have to maintain the reputation of the Spinks legacy. It's pressure, for sure, but I'm not just a Spinks by name; I have the talent to go along with that name," Cory said.

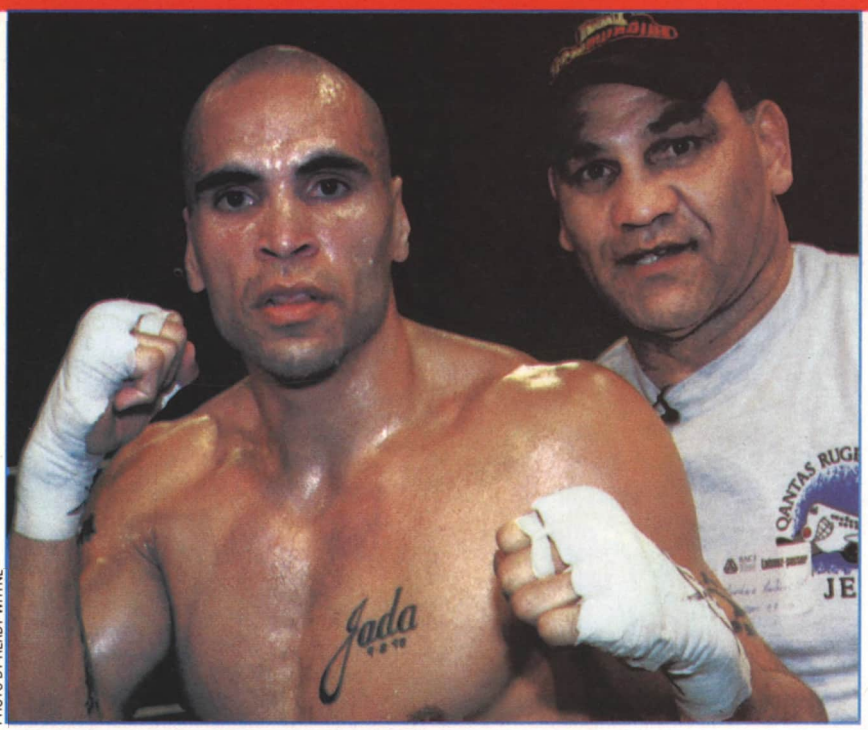


PHOTO BY HERBY WHYNE

Australia's Anthony Mundine poses with his father, Tony, who failed in a bid to lift the middleweight championship from Carlos Monzon in 1974. When Anthony won an alphabet belt in 2003 by beating Antwun Echols, he dedicated the victory to his dad.

Cory is fortunate that Leon lends his support from a comfortable distance. There are probably times when Hector Camacho Jr. wishes his father wasn't such an annoying presence at ringside.

After stopping Eric Jakubowski back in 2001, Hector Jr. was preparing to answer a few questions for the TV commentators when Hector Sr. jumped in front his son and began yelling, "Come on, Sugar Ray! Come get some more! The Macho Man is still here, baby!" Never mind that the idea of a Camacho-Leonard rematch was ridiculous, interrupting his son's interview to thump his own chest was about as low as a father can go. Four months later, during his son's decision loss to Omar Weis, Hector Sr. made such a fool of himself at ringside that security guards escorted him from the arena.

"It's hard for the sons of famous fighters," said Aaron Pryor, whose son Stephen fought briefly at middleweight. "Everyone is looking for a repeat of their father's style and career. I would much rather see a kid who can think for himself and stand on his own two feet."

While the sons of famous fighters have their own set of challenges, the sons of fringe contenders have their troubles, too. Floyd Mayweather's son grew up to be one of the best fighters in the world, and Bill "Dynamite" Douglas' son scored the upset of the century when he kayoed Mike Tyson, but these father and son duos rarely had Hallmark moments like the Mancinis or the Mundines. Instead, they tore into each other like characters from a Eugene O'Neill psychodrama. Fortunately, the Douglases reconciled long before Bill's death in 1999. As for the Mayweathers, they're still badmouthing each other.

We have seen the sons of great champions have marginal careers, and the sons of journeyman go on to win titles. What we haven't seen in boxing is a great champion whose son is his equal in the ring, like the Webers of bowling or the Earnhardts of NASCAR. Perhaps one day Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. will incite the same passion among Mexican fans as his dad, who once drew 130,000 fans for a routine title defense. Maybe Roberto Duran's son will carry on his dad's snarling legacy. But whether they succeed or not, here's hoping they'll enjoy their careers and maintain good relationships with their fathers. If any of them need advice on how to be a second-generation fighter, they could learn something from the remarkable attitude of Marvis Frazier.

"People always ask what it was like growing up in the shadow of my father," Marvis said. "I always thought of it as standing in a great light."

Except for Laila Ali, no second-generation fighter entered the pro ranks with as much hoopla as Marvis Frazier. He also

PHOTO BY PAT ORR

Being the son of a famous fighter is clearly a mixed blessing, and there have been a few times when Hector Camacho Jr. wished his flamboyant father would tone down his act, especially when the two-division former titlist tries to steal the spotlight away from his son.

PHOTO BY MARTY ROSENGARTEN

Father-son team Bill and Buster Douglas had a rocky relationship, but they were reconciled by the time Bill (left) died in 1999. Although the elder Douglas never achieved the fame and fortune his son did, he was a hard-hitting middleweight and light heavy during the 1960s and '70s.

faced a lot of cynicism, since he was seen as the pampered son of a millionaire, and after being kayoed in his last amateur fight, and then sidelined at different times with a pinched nerve, hepatitis, and an eye injury, Marvis seemed too fragile for pro boxing.

Still, the team of Smokin' Joe and "Little Smoke" was marketable. Perhaps hoping to find a story to match the Mancini phenomenon, CBS televised many of Marvis' bouts, including a novelty fight against Joe Bugner, a veteran who had lost a decision to Marvis' dad a decade earlier. With Joe growling orders from his corner, Marvis outhustled the aging Bugner to win a unanimous decision. The win inexplicably earned young Marvis a trip to Caesars Palace to fight the best heavyweight of the day, Larry Holmes.

Joe insisted his inexperienced son was ready for Holmes. In a dramatic gesture, Marvis wore the same green trunks his father had worn when he'd defeated Muhammad Ali in 1971. The trunks didn't help. Holmes battered Marvis until the fight was stopped at 2:57 of the opening round.

Marvis showed some of the famous Frazier courage against Bonecrusher Smith when he survived a knockdown and a broken jaw to win a unanimous decision. Unfortunately, Marvis' next fight was another first-round knockout loss, this time to Mike Tyson.

Joe Frazier had other children who boxed, including sons Rodney and Hector and daughter Jacqui, but Marvis was the first and therefore received the most attention. Nowadays Marvis is a minister, but also serves as his father's business adviser. In a way, Marvis was fortunate. His only losses were to a couple of great fighters, and he made some money along the way. The worst he had to hear was that he wasn't as tough as his dad.

Imagine how the sons of Laila Ali, Lucia Rijker, and Christy Martin will feel when they learn they're not as tough as their mothers. ■

Don Stradley is a freelance writer living in Rockport, Massachusetts, and a regular contributor to this magazine.

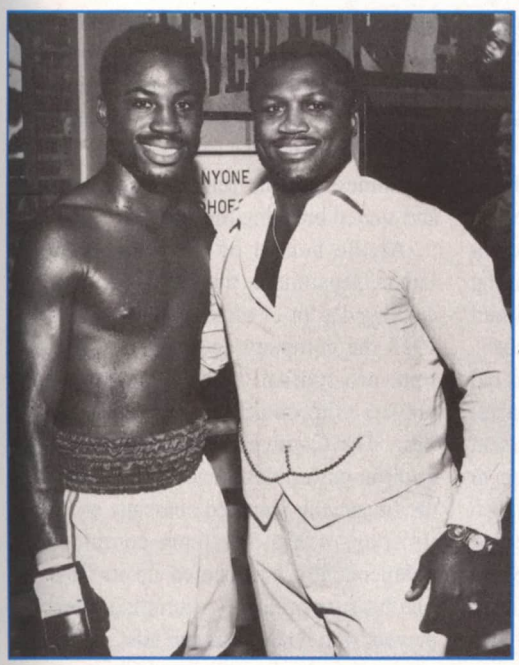


PHOTO BY PAT ORR

Former heavyweight champion Joe Frazier has been through two eras of fighting offspring. First, son Marvis turned pro in 1980 and tallied a 19-2 (8) record before retiring in '88. Then daughter Jacqui (right) took the plunge in 2000, and is currently 11-1 (9).

1920s HEAVYWEIGHT

K.O. CHRISTNER

He Played Catcher To Jack Dempsey And Babe Ruth

By Pete Ehrmann

By the time he was 32 years old, before he laced on his first pair of boxing gloves, Meyers Wilson Christner had already lived the kind of colorful, swashbuckling existence plenty of men would be content to spend the rest of their lives reviewing from the comfort of their favorite bar stool.

Had they known what Christner would put them through, promoter Tex Rickard and a bunch of corporate fat cats might've even set up a permanent tab for the man who threw a monkey wrench into Wall Street's plan to take over the heavyweight championship in 1928. Actually, tire iron is more appropriate than monkey wrench, as Christner's right fist hit like one, and the power behind it was developed in the mills of Akron, Ohio, where the Goodyear and Firestone companies manufactured the automobile tires that kept America rolling.

"His strength was developed by working in the difficult Goodyear and Firestone 'pits,' an area of extreme heat where cured tires were removed from their molds," recounted Rev. David A. Christner, grandson of the long-ago heavyweight contender, and the Christner family historian. "The mold sealed in tire curing. The seal was broken by hand, using a large pry bar and brute strength."

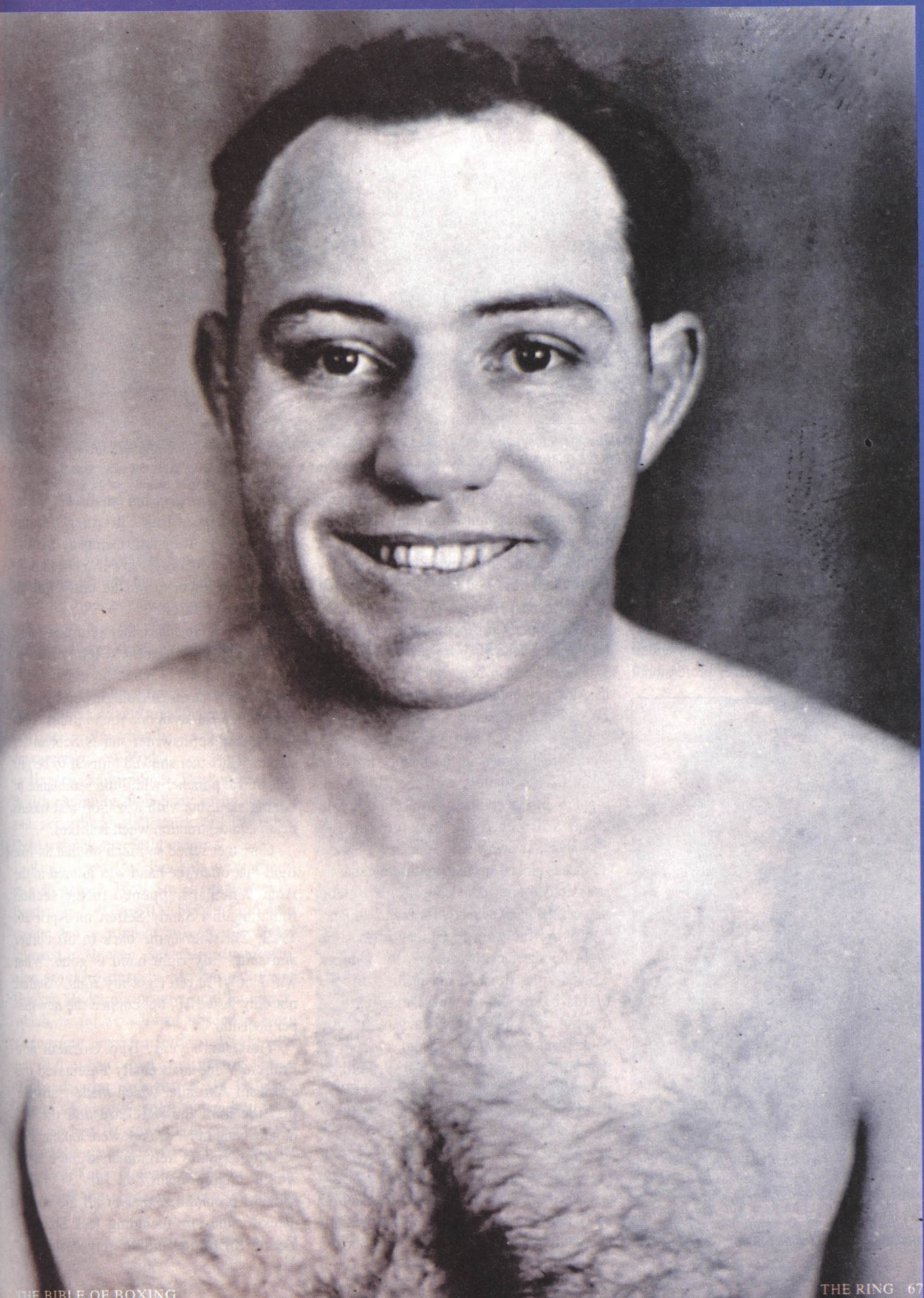
Brute strength and that right hand earned K.O. Christner his nickname and changed the course of heavyweight history 76 years ago, much like the hitting prowess of Christner's old friend and battery mate, Babe Ruth, did in baseball.

They met when they were 12 years old and inmates of St. Mary's Industrial School in Baltimore. Christner was sent there by his father after getting Meyers to show up at public school proved too much for his parents. At St. Mary's, George Herman Ruth was the ace of the 3rd Dormitory baseball team, and Christner was his catcher. Later, Christner himself would play some semi-pro baseball.

But first he enlisted in the U.S. Army. While stationed with the 37th Infantry outside of San Antonio, Texas, Christner helped General John J. Pershing futilely chase after Pancho Villa, the famous Mexican revolutionary who had raided several American border towns. Upon his discharge from service, Christner settled in his native Pennsylvania and worked in the coalmines until he relocated to Akron and started breaking tire seals.

At the behest of the Ohio State Labor Department, the Goodyear plant employed a lot of mute workers, and in 1915 the company sponsored its own semi-pro football team comprised of players who could neither speak nor hear. The Goodyear Silents became a gridiron powerhouse, and in 1922, after the financially strapped company ended its sponsorship, the team continued independently and beefed up its front line by surreptitiously recruiting a few players who could hear and talk, including the 6-foot-tall, 200-pound Christner.

These ringers were under strict



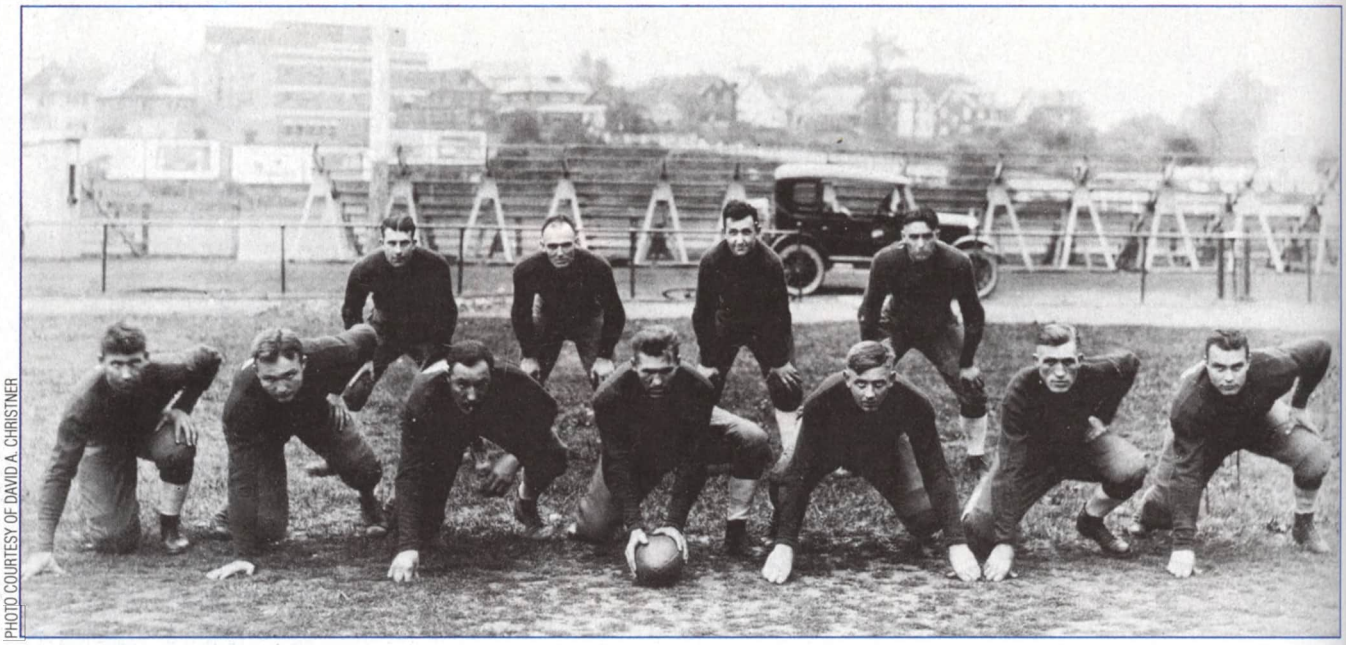


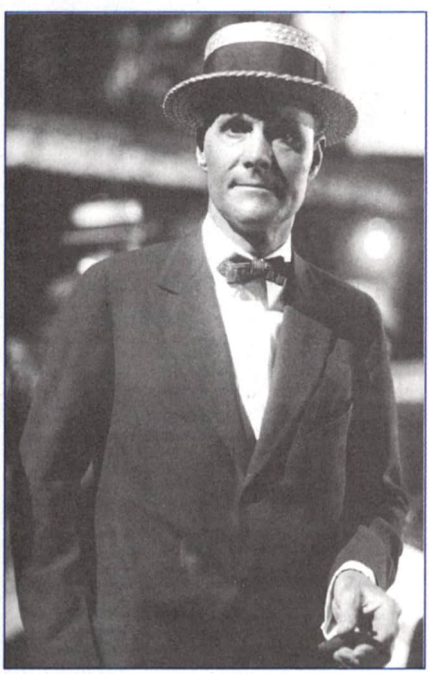
PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID A. CHRISTNER

Christner (front row, third from left) played football for the Goodyear Silents, a semi-pro team comprised of deaf mutes. When it was discovered that he could hear and speak, Christner took up boxing at the relatively old age of 32.

orders not to let on that they could speak and hear, and many an opposing team's quarterback ended up battered and frustrated by Christner's uncanny ability to break up plays as if he could almost hear the audibles that were called.

According to one newspaper account, Christner's career with the Silents ended when, "in one game, a former professional heavyweight took offense at Christner's undue roughness and shook his fist under the 'mute's' large nozzle, yelling: 'You can't hear what I'm saying, you blankety-blank-blank, but you can understand what this fist means, you blankety-blank-blank!'"

Whereupon Christner indicated he did by breaking the fellow's jaw with one punch.



Tex Rickard (pictured) thought he'd found the perfect opponent for heavyweight prospect Knute Hansen in Christner, but the promoter and his Wall Street backers who had invested in Hansen were to be sorely disappointed in what materialized inside the ring.

Firestone also held weekly smokers at its Akron clubhouse, and at one of them in 1926, Christner scored his first knockout in the ring after he and a co-worker with whom he'd argued in the factory pit were told to settle matters with the gloves on. Fighters in the company smokers got paid about $50 per fight, and the smitten Christner put away 32 of the first 37 guys he faced, picked up his fighting nickname, and decided after disposing of one Bumbo Meyers that he was ready for bigger things.

Taking the train to Chicago the same night he shellacked Meyers, the balding 33-year-old showed up at the Lincoln Fields camp where Jack Dempsey was training to try to get his heavyweight title back from Gene Tunney, and announced that he had come to see what he could do in the ring with "The Mannasa Mauler."

"I puts him down for a nut," recalled Dempsey handler Gus Wilson later, "gives him some gloves, tells Dempsey to turn a few into him and we'll soon be rid of the guy. Jack belts him proper. He smacks him body and chin, and I notice that the guy keeps his mouth shut but the blood oozes out of the corners of his mouth. I stops the affair and pries this Christner's mouth open. Believe it or not, Dempsey has driven some of the guy's lower teeth into the upper bridgework, and he can't get his mouth open himself."

Muted again, Christner returned home and picked up where he'd left off at the Firestone smokers. When he graduated to main events at the Akron Armory, knocking out Joe Burke in one round in his debut there, local sportswriter James Schlemmer wrote, "Christner showed himself to be just a powerful puncher with little semblance of boxing skill, but with a wallop that means death and destruction when it strikes."

Christner relied so much on that ax-like right that often the hand was injured in the ring. When it happened in the second round against Sandy Seifert on April 26, 1928, Christner came back to his corner and said, "My right hand is gone. What will I do? I haven't got my right." Seifert not only lasted 10, but copped the newspaper decision.

That same year, Bud Gorman and Frankie Wine also easily outclassed the awkward Akronite, which made Christner just the man that Rickard and the big money gang in New York were looking for.

After Tunney relinquished the heavyweight championship on July 31, 1928, Rickard proclaimed that of all the candidates for the job, including Jack Sharkey, Young Stribling, and Johnny Risko, the

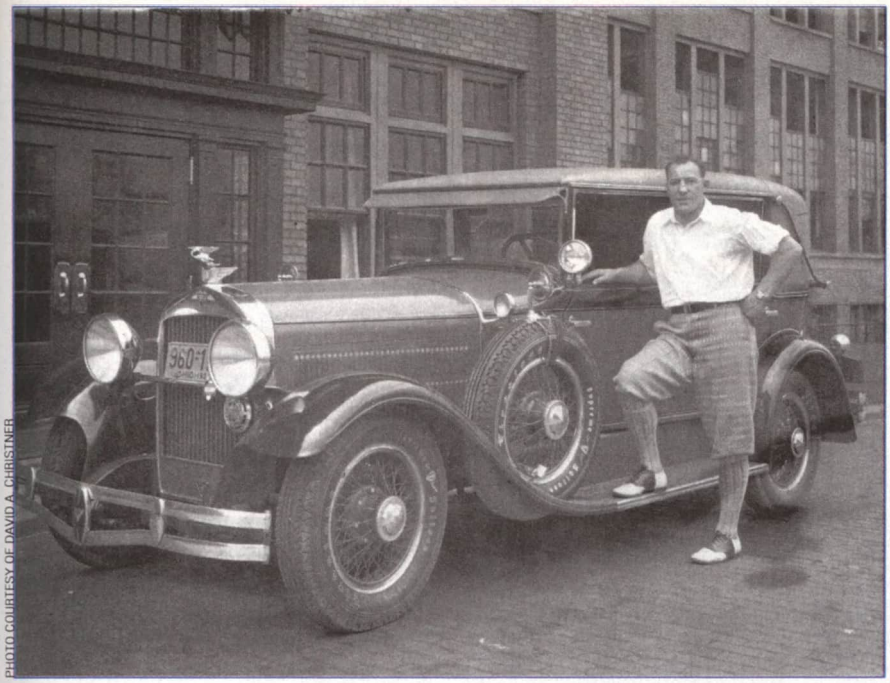


PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID A. CHRISTNER

Christner poses with his new car outside of the Firestone Tire Company in Akron, Ohio, where he developed his strength and punching power. Unlike many fighters, Christner invested his money wisely and operated a bowling alley after his fighting days were over.

most likely to succeed was a 23-year-old handsome blonde named Knute Hansen. Born in Copenhagen, Denmark, Hansen grew up in Wisconsin and, after a couple fights in Milwaukee, worked his way to the Far East and Asia on tall-masted schooners, beat up some natives, and had a lot of exotic adventures that made good newspaper copy when he resumed his boxing career in New York.

Hansen could punch. He knocked out British champion Phil Scott in one round, and, according to Rickard, "all the other heavyweights are afraid of him."

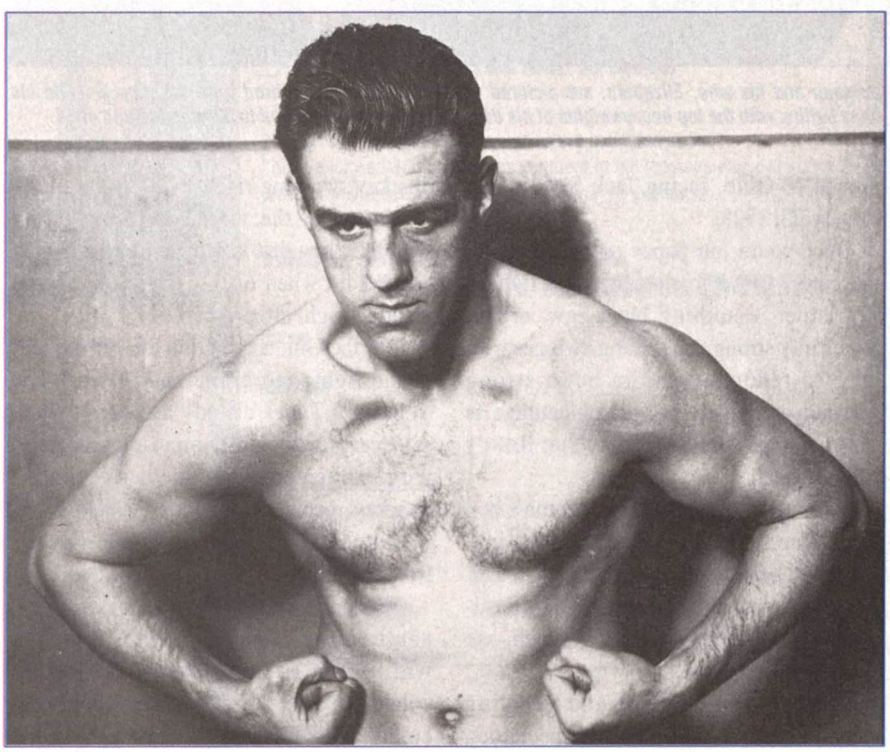
Rickard wasn't Hansen's only friend in high places. Wall Street titans Sprulle Braden and Walter P. Chrysler, the auto tycoon, led a group of millionaires who'd invested in Hansen. Several of them were also stockholders in Madison Square Garden, Rickard's promotional bailiwick, which, as far as a lot of observers were concerned, accounted for Rickard's unusual enthusiasm for the big Dane. Rickard even induced Billy Gibson, who'd managed Tunney and retired from boxing when Tunney did, to un-retire and become the guiding force behind what *The New York Times* referred to, in the jargon of the stock market, as "Knute Hansen Pfd."

Rickard's self-serving and incessant tub-thumping for Hansen raised eyebrows among veteran fight wags who'd dubbed Knute the "Melancholy Dane" after he performed indifferently in dropping decisions to Franz Deiner and Paulino Uzcudun before he blew away the easily-blown-away Scott. They weren't swallowing Rickard's attempted coronation by press release, and the Hansen brain trust decided it would be best to open their new show off-Broadway, as it were, to work out any bugs.

When a Gibson confidante in Cleveland sent word about a 34-year-old "big, game, hard-hitting, awkward slowpoke," K.O. Christner got the call to serve as the initial sacrifice on Hansen's grand march to the throne.

"Wouldn't it be a laugh if some palooka, thrown in with Hansen in his first fight since he's come so thoroughly into the spotlight, should whack him on the chin and knock down the whole house of cards?" former lightweight champion Benny Leonard had asked in a syndicated newspaper column three months before 20-1 underdog Christner made him a prophet on December 4, 1928, by pounding Wall Street's blue-chipper into a virtual coma in eight rounds. It took Knute 15 minutes to relearn how to use his legs, and a little while longer for him to remember his own name.

Gibson went right back into retirement, Hansen's millionaire backers moved on to more reliable investments, and the suddenly famous Akron rubber man bounced into Madison Square Garden for his first fight



Christner's status as a heavyweight contender ended when he was stopped by Norwegian Otto Von Porat (pictured) in 1929. But Christner fought on for another six years, losing as many as he won.

PHOTO COURTESY OF DAVID A. CHRISTNER

Christner and his wife, Elizabeth, are pictured years after Christner retired from the ring. Despite his many battles with the top heavyweights of his day, the former slugger lived to the ripe old age of 84.

outside of Ohio, facing Jack Sharkey on January 25, 1929.

Once again, on paper it looked like a bad career move for the Buckeye fighter. "Christner is nothing but a raw, crude, powerfully strong and willing swinger with little to recommend him but a strong physique and plenty of fighting courage as his principal assets," sniffed THE RING'S Eddie Borden.

K.O. cheerfully concurred. "I can't box a lick," he said. "I'm a hitter if I'm anything. My best points are my strong constitution and a punch. You can see the constitution for yourself. As for my punch, ask the guys I hit."

To the astonishment and growing delight of the 20,000 Garden spectators, for five rounds Christner seemed on his way to another huge upset as he tore into Sharkey, winging right hands at the future champion of the world. "You have just seen the blow that killed Hansen!" shouted a ringsider when one of them just missed its target right after the opening bell.

But the Ohioan faded in the second half of the fight, and at the end of what *The New York Times* called "a contest which set every man and woman present wild with excitement throughout its length," Sharkey received a majority decision that was greeted with lusty boos and catcalls from the crowd.

"This Christner is a man of granite," admired the *Times*' James P. Dawson, while John Kieran, the paper's sports columnist, wrote that "the fans would welcome another sight of [Christner] in the Garden ring. He's as tough as they come, and he carries a wild and wicked wallop."

Less than a month later, 20,000 Garden customers did welcome him back to fight Uzcudun, another granite man who used his superior experience to win a unanimous decision over Christner. A few months after that, on the undercard of the Uzcudun-Max Schmeling fight at Yankee Stadium, Christner suffered his first inside-the-distance loss when former Olympic champion Otto Von Porat stopped him in nine rounds. Christner rocked Von Porat several times, but ran out of gas. And title contention.

Over the next six years, he fought all over the U.S. The wins and losses came out pretty even. Christner beat Ernie Schaaf, George Panka, Emmett Rocco, and Leroy Haynes, among other lesser lights, but also lost to Schaaf, Young Stribling, Primo Carnera, Max Baer, King Levinsky, and Maxie Rosenbloom, among other lesser lights. He also lost by first-round knockout in 58 seconds to Mickey Walker, although Christner claimed that the ring ropes at the Chicago Coliseum had been loosened, and that after he fell through them trying to avoid Walker's opening rush, "two big men put their chairs on me" and pinned him down until the count was completed.

On February 12, 1932, Christner got Dempsey back in the ring, in an exhibition match in Cleveland. Christner had broken his right hand beating Bearcat Wright in Omaha not long before, but still managed to hammer the ex-champ pretty good with it before Jack put him down in the third. They were pals by then, and afterward Christner showed Dempsey how he used to make tires at the Firestone plant.

Unlike a lot of his contemporaries, Christner socked away his money, and after his retirement he operated a bowling alley in Maryland. When he died in 1979 at 84, his obituary credited him with "nearly 250 pro fights," although most available records come up well short of that figure, citing his record as 51-41-4 (29). The obituary also noted that he'd had 97 stitches over his left eye, 84 over the right, 46 in his mouth, and three broken noses.

They were testament to the courage that was immutable no matter who came out of the other corner, and was responsible for bringing the depression several months early to some Wall Street barons. ■

Pete Ehrmann is a freelance writer based in West Allis, Wisconsin, and a regular contributor to this magazine.

A Salute To THE LEGENDS

Dale Earnhardt. George Harrison. Elvis Presley. Bob Hope. Johnny Cash.

These men gave so much of themselves to the world, and their passing left a huge void for us all. Their deaths are to be mourned, but their lives are to be celebrated.

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SUMMARY

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Vitali Klitschko KO 8 Corrie Sanders
(Wins Vacant World Title)
Chris Byrd D 12 Andrew Golota
(Retains IBF Title)
John Ruiz KO 11 Fres Oquendo
(Retains WBA Title)
Lamon Brewster KO 5 Wladimir Klitschko
Hasim Rahman KO 2 Mario Cawley
Jameel McCline KO 1 Wayne Llewelyn
Lance Whitaker KO 5 Friday Ahunanya
DaVarryl Williamson W 12 Eliecer Castillo
Jeremy Williams KO 8 Attila Levin
Henry Akinwande KO 10 Anton Nel
Oleg Maskaev KO 2 Craig Tomlinson
Gerald Nobles KO 1 Willie Williams
Timo Hoffman KO 2 Quinn Navarre
Nicolay Valuev W 8 Marcelo Dominguez
Matt Skelton KO 12 Michael Sprott
Owen Beck KO 3 Daniel Frank
Owen Beck W Disq. 2 Scott Conner
Eliseo Castillo KO 1 Drexie Frank James
Dale Crowe KO 3 Casey Truesdale
Dennis Bakhtov KO 8 Vitaly Shkraba
Kali Meehan KO 6 Damon Reed
Bruce Seldon KO 2 Lenzie Morgan
China Smith KO 3 Shawn Robinson

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Middleweight prospect Ahmed Kaddour bludgeons Juan Carlos Garcia along the ropes

Cisse Salif KO 1 Trent Surratt
Timor Ibragimov W 8 Terry McGroom
Roman Greenberg KO 6 Jason Gethers

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Wayne Braithwaite W 12 Louis Azille
(Retains WBC Title)
Kelvin Davis KO 8 Ezra Sellers
(Wins Vacant IBF Title)
Pietro Aurino KO 6 Alain Simon
Jorge Castro KO 7 Aaron Soria
Lou Del Valle KO 5 Tiwon Taylor
Vadim Tokarev W 10 Arthur Williams
Imamu Mayfield W 6 Rayco Saunders
Robert Norton KO 1 Greg Scott-Briggs
Michael Rush W 6 Manu Ntoh

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS

Mehdi Sahnoune KO 6 Jose Luis Loyola
Julian Letterlough D 12 Daniel Judah
Etienne Whitaker KO 2 Carlos Bates
Etienne Whitaker KO 1 Sam Reese
Jaffa Ballogou KO 2 Joseph Kiwanuka
Otis Grant W 10 Prince Badi Ajamu
Tomasz Adamek KO 5 Gabrail Gabrailov
Freeman Barr W 8 Anthony Brooks
Yusef Mack W 6 Ray Berry
Aneudi Santos KO 3 Joseph Harris

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Manny Siaca W 12 Anthony Mundine
(Wins WBA Title)
Syd Vanderpool W 12 Tito Mendoza
Brian Magee W 12 Jerry Elliott
Ron Weaver D 10 Will McIntyre
Nader Hamdan W 8 John Wyborn
Yoshinori Nishizawa KO 5 Paula Tuilau
Vitali Tsypko W 12 Alexander Zaitsev
Jean-Paul Mendy W 10 Frederic Esther
Andre Thysse KO 5 Mthokozisi Malinga
Anthony Hanshaw KO 2 Kevin Butts
James McGirt KO 1 Eric Brown

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Ricardo Mayorga W 10 Eric Mitchell
Kingsley Ikeke W 12 Kirino Garcia
Maselino Masoe KO 2 Evans Ashira
Sam Soliman KO 3 Nico Toriri
Carlos Bojorquez KO 4 Ron Weaver

Quinton Smith KO 6 Marcos Primera
Dirk Dzemski KO 4 Chris Walsh
Dorian Beaupierre D 10 Daniel Edouard
Yoshihiro Araki W 10 Naotaka Hozumi
Troy Rowland W 10 Charles Whittaker
Yuri Tsarenko KO 8 Igor Tverdokhleb
Willie Gibbs KO 6 Giorbis Barthelemy
Ahmed Kaddour KO 4 Juan Carlos Garcia
Tarek Rached D 4 Carlos Lamberti

JUNIOR MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Javier Castillejo KO 3 Genaro Rios
Daniel Santos W 12 Michael Lerma
Rodney Jones KO 9 Andres Pacheco
Manuel Gomez D 10 Hector Quiroz
Diobelys Hurtado W 10 Joshua Smith
Sergio Martinez KO 9 Richard Williams
Mamadou Thiam KO 3 Ali Benchabla
Mihaly Kotai KO 11 Derek Roche
Jamie Moore KO 5 Adam Katumwa
Jimmy Lange W 10 Sammy Sparkman
Tshepo Mashego W 12
Christopher Buthelezi
Manning Galloway W 8 Bryon Mackie
Joachim Alcine KO 4 Jose Hilton Santos
Walter Matthysse KO 2 Jorge Gomez Perez
Anthony Shuler W 10 Harold Brazier
Nurhan Suleyman KO 6
Archak Ter-Meliksetian
Aslanbek Kodzoev W 8 Rasheem Brown
Ian MacKillop W 8 Robert Garcia
Najal Turpin KO 3 Gary Grant
Yuri Foreman W 8 Calvin Shakir
Sechew Powell KO 2 Sergio Melendez
Ray Sanchez KO 1 Richard Conchas

WELTERWEIGHTS

Cory Spinks W 12 Zab Judah
(Retains World Title)
Jesse James Leija Tech. Win 8
Marteze Logan
Kermit Cintron KO 6 Elio Ortiz
Chris Smith W 8 Darien Ford
Efren Hinojosa W 4 Luis Montes
Joe Hutchinson W 6 Oscar Delgado
Armando Velardez KO 10 Miguel Angel Ruiz
Rev Santillan W 12 Hiroshi Watanabe
Mustapha Bouzid W 12 Luca Messi
Hiroyuki Maeda W 10 Shuichi Kobayashi
Tadashi Yuba W 10 Jun Kitagawa
Juaquin Gallardo W 10 Arturo Morua
Jose Luis Cruz Felix D 10 Lino Perez
Brooke Wellby D 12 Darelle Sukerow
Mikhail Krivolapov KO 2 Vladimir Borovski
Maxim Nesterenko KO 8 Pavel Melnikov
Paul Malginaggi W 10 Rocky Martinez
Jeffrey Resto KO 8 Henry Marsh
Luis Collazo W 6 Tom Davis
James Webb KO 5 Xavier Tolliver
David Jackson KO 1 Jorge Aguilar
Nicasio Sanchez W 4 Roberto Duran Jr.
Alexis Camacho W 4 Geraldo Ramirez
Sumya Anani W 6 Lisa Holewyne

JUNIOR WELTERWEIGHTS

Vivian Harris W 12 Oktay Urkal
Lovemore Ndou KO 3 Ariel Aparicio
Junior Witter KO 3 Oscar Hall
Paul Spadafora W 10 Ruben Galvan
Souleymane Mbaye W 6 Walter Saporiti
Ebo Elder KO 4 William Rojas
Craig Weber W 10 Angel Manfredy
Muhammad Abdullaev KO 8 Jesse Feliciano
Miguel Angel Huerta KO 9 Allan Vester
Americo Santos W 8 Richard Best
Marty Jakubowski KO 5 Charles McClellan

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Lakva Sim KO 5 Miguel Callist
(Wins Vacant WBA Title)
Jorge Barrios W 10 Diego Alzugaray
Juan Diaz KO 2 Martin O'Malley
Damien Fuller W 12 Lamar Murphy
Goyo Vargas KO 3 Reggie Sanders
Matt Zegan KO 3 Jimmy Zeikle
Edner Cherry KO 8 Juan Gomez Trinidad
Jason Cook W 12 Kevin Bennett
Antonio Pitalua KO 2 Carlos Urias
Pedro Miranda W 12 Muzaffer Tosun
Antonio Ramirez W 10 Luis Arceo
Prawet Singwangcha KO 4 Monte Carlos
Ivan Hernandez W 10 Angel Granados
Chad Brisson KO 9 Sergio Gonzalez
Julio Cesar Chavez Jr. KO 2 Arturo Ocampo
Jessica Rakoczy W 8 Mia St. John

JUNIOR LIGHTWEIGHTS

Rocky Juarez W 10 Joe Morales
Mike Anchondo Tech. Win 5 Jose Luis Soto
Ivan Valle KO 4 Antonio Cervantes
Boris Sinitsin W 12 Ali Oubaali
Craig Docherty KO 6 Kpakpo Allotey
Nobuhito Honmo W 10 Tominori Nakagawa
Robert Guerrero KO 2 Juan Polo Perez
Cornelius Lock KO 1 Marcos Badillo

FEATHERWEIGHTS

In Jin Chi KO 7 Michael Brodie
(Wins Vacant WBC Title)
Zahir Raheem KO 1 Rodney Jones
Fernando Velardez KO 2 Mike Juarez
Akihiro Kanai W 10 Hirokazu Uesugi
Fahprakorb Rakkiatgym KO 4
Sonny Manakane
Fabio Oliva KO 2 Carlos Rios
Jorge Linares W 10 Michael Domingo
Zaike Takemoto W 10
Saohin Sithchai Condo
Daniel Ponce-DeLeon KO 7
Anthony Martinez
Jorge Martinez W 8 Edel Ruiz

JUNIOR FEATHERWEIGHTS

Napapol Kiatisakchokchai KO 3 Johnny Lear
Sod Looknongyangtoy W 12 Hussein Pazzi
Ricardo Castillo W 12 Ruben Estanislao
Somsak Sithchatchawal KO 2
Steven Togelang
Jose Antonio Meza KO 10 Andres Cabrera

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Veerapol Sahaprom KO 12 Julio Cesar Avila
(Retains WBC Title)
Fernando Montiel KO 3 Samuel Lopez
Heriberto Ruiz Tech. Win 9 Ricardo Vargas
Jose Navarro KO 5 Martin Armenta
Hussein Hussein KO 5 Tozer Dobing
Vic Darchinyan KO 2 Falazona Fidal
Chatchai Sasakul W 12 Allan Fuentes
Steve Molitor W 12 Hugo Dianzo
Damaen Kelly KO 1 Andrey Kostin
Poonsawat Kratingdaenggym KO 10
Takhir Ibragimov
Vusi Malinga KO 1 Joel Bauya

JUNIOR BANTAMWEIGHTS

Pongsaklek Wonjongkam KO 3
Ronnie Canete
(Non-Title Bout)
Hawk Makepula KO 3 Lunga Ntontela
Waenpetch Chuwatana KO 2 Eiji Kojima
Gilberto Gonzalez KO 5
Komrith Lukkeongmuekol
Koji Koyama KO 7
Panomdetch Au Yuthanakorn
Gabriel Elizondo W 8 Ruben Contreras

FLYWEIGHTS

Brahim Asloum W 12 Ivan Pozo
Andrea Sarritzu W 6 Luis Monges
David Guerault W 8 John Bikai
Francisco Arce W 8 Miguel Martinez
Vicky Tahumil W 12 Marvin Tampus
Manuel Vargas W 12 Francisco Garcia

JUNIOR FLYWEIGHTS

Jorge Arce KO 5 Melchor Cob-Castro
(Retains WBC Title)
Roberto Vasquez KO 11 Jose Garcia Bernal
Shingo Yamaguchi W 12 Nobuaki Masuda

STRAWWEIGHTS

Daniel Reyes KO 3 Roberto Leyva
(Retains IBF Title)

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The Ring

FIGHTER of the MONTH

There were quite a few heavyweights who came up big during the time period under consideration for this issue's Fighter of the Month honors. Vitali Klitschko won the world heavyweight title; however, he merely did what was expected, stopping out-of-shape Corrie Sanders in eight rounds. Lamon Brewster did the unexpected, scoring a TKO over heavily favored Wladimir Klitschko; however, Brewster really backed into the win, taking a pounding for the majority of the fight until Klitschko punched himself out. Andrew Golota also far exceeded prefight predictions, going toe-to-toe with top contender Chris Byrd for 12 rounds; however, Golota didn't quite do enough to capture the victory, coming away with a hard-earned draw.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

The heavyweight who stood apart from the crowd, whose performance didn't allow for any reasonable criticism, was Monte Barrett. He fought impressively from the first bell to the last, winning a clear-cut decision over undefeated Dominick Guinn, the man thought by virtually everybody to be the brightest prospect in the division. Barrett boxed with a calm confidence, never allowing Guinn to get into a groove. The highlight for "Two Gunz" was when he wobbled Guinn badly in the seventh, and he then avoided the possibility of a hometown robbery by clearly outworking and outmaneuvering his opponent in the 10th and final round.

Was it the most important heavyweight fight of the month? Certainly not. But for all the assorted belts that were at stake in other fights, nobody dished out a more comprehensive belting than Barrett.

• • • •

Monte Barrett

RINGSIDE REPORTS

Cory Spinks W 12 Zab Judah

Las Vegas, Nevada: After taming the wild man of the welterweight division, Ricardo Mayorga, to become undisputed welterweight champion, Spinks, 147, St. Louis, Missouri, faced an altogether different challenge in former junior welterweight titleholder Judah, 146, Brooklyn, New York. Spinks prevailed again, but he had to pull himself off the canvas in the closing seconds of the final round before claiming a close unanimous decision victory. It was his second defense of the IBF belt he won against Michelle Piccirillo last March and his first defense since seizing the WBC, WBA, and RING titles from Mayorga.

Unlike his rather sloppy fight against the Nicaraguan, this fight was like a chess match as the two southpaws used their jabs repeatedly to work their way in and try to find the openings. It was not until the final two rounds that the fans at the Mandalay Bay were brought to their feet, when both challenger and champion hit the deck. Of the two, Spinks was hurt the most, but time ran out before Judah could do enough damage to win the fight.

Both fighters began the first round cautiously, feeling the other out, throwing southpaw jabs, mostly to the head. Visibly bigger than his opponent, Spinks unofficially outweighed Judah by 10 pounds, and his single punches seemed to land with greater authority. He drew blood from Judah's nose in the second and was gaining in confidence.

By the third round, Judah was successfully making Spinks miss. However, the champion remained in control until Judah, 30-2 (22), started to feint Spinks, 33-2 (11), onto his left uppercut in the fourth.

The fifth through eighth rounds were generally very close and could have gone either way. Judah, 26, used his footwork and hand speed to try to keep Spinks, also 26, at a distance. Judah began to take more control in the ninth and 10th, landing a quick left whenever he wanted, but Spinks was always in front of him looking for the big opportunity—which he eventually got.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Spinks slaps Judah with a southpaw right

In the 11th round, as both fighters exchanged combinations, a short left hand from Spinks put Judah on the canvas. Judah wasn't badly hurt, but rather just caught off-balance with his hands dangling at his sides. The momentary lapse cost Judah crucial points on the scorecards.

He was second best in the 12th as well, until he caught the champion in the final minute with a big left that put Spinks down. Spinks was clearly hurt and tired. Judah moved in and hurt him again, but backed off as Spinks fell into the ropes shortly before the bell ended the fight.

"I probably should not have stopped after I knocked him down in the 12th," Judah said. "I let him off. But I have no complaints. I felt I fought okay. I hope we can do it again."

Judge Doug Tucker (USA) scored the fight 116-111, while Chuck Giampa (USA) and Dave Moretti (USA) both scored it 114-112, all for Spinks. THE RING saw it 114-113 for Spinks.

"I boxed beautiful tonight," Spinks said afterward. "I give him credit, he's a great fighter. I was just a little better tonight." He admitted about the knockdown, "I got relaxed and careless. Judah hit me with a good shot."

Spinks was later confronted at the postfight press conference by Floyd Mayweather. The fighters got in each other's faces while building up what could turn out to be a highly intriguing match between the two.

The referee was Joe Cortez (USA).
Television: HBO
Promoter: Don King Productions
(4-10-04)
Wayne McCullough

Lamon Brewster KO 5 Wladimir Klitschko

Las Vegas, Nevada: Klitschko was supposed to be one of the leaders amongst the next generation of heavyweights, but Brewster ended that thinking when he recorded a technical knockout victory at the end of the fifth round of their scheduled 12-rounder at the Mandalay Bay Events Center.

Brewster, 226, Indianapolis, Indiana, was the big underdog going into the fight with Ukrainian Klitschko, 243, partly on their past results against Charles Shufford (Brewster lost to Shufford on points, while Klitschko had no trouble stopping him in six rounds). Klitschko was also the man being groomed for stardom, a possible successor to Lennox Lewis, but in the end he looked far from this.

Brewster, 31, came out in the first round swinging hard with rights and lefts that, for a moment, had Klitschko, 28, looking a little shocked. It was almost the same look we saw on his face during his upset loss to Corrie Sanders last year, which was probably still on his mind. But gathering his composure, Klitschko started using his piston-like jab and began peppering Brewster almost every time he threw it. Undaunted, Brewster, the shorter man by four inches, continued to march forward.

The second round was all Klitschko, with his boxing skills

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Brewster takes advantage of Klitschko's collapse

keeping him a safe distance from Brewster. However, about a minute into round three, Brewster connected with a quick left jab that had Klitschko shaken.

But the Ukrainian recovered and had a big fourth round, as he landed fast one-two combinations, hitting Brewster over and over again. The tough Brewster took most of the punches well, but a big left-right combination finally put him on the canvas for the first time in his career with about a minute left to go in the round. Gutsy Brewster got up and fought back, wrestling the taller Klitschko to the canvas at the bell. By this stage, Klitschko looked as if he was having real trouble breathing. He seemed to have used everything in his arsenal to knock out the shorter fighter, but it had not worked.

In the fifth, Brewster came out with determination in his eyes, and midway through the round, he hit Klitschko hard with a big double left hook and right hand to the body. When Klitschko slumped onto the ropes, referee Robert Byrd (USA) ruled the ropes were holding him up and gave Klitschko an eight-count. Brewster moved in for the finish and landed a combination just as the bell sounded. Klitschko fell to the canvas through exhaustion after the bell and the referee correctly ruled it no knockdown. Byrd gave Klitschko every opportunity to rise, but he couldn't get up, as he was completely out of energy. The referee had no choice but to wave it off, the official time 3:00 of round five.

"Klitschko couldn't take care of himself," ref Byrd explained. "I tried to get him to respond, but he didn't. I've never stopped a fight like that before."

Brewster dedicated his victory to former trainer Bill Slayton, who died last year.

"I believed in myself from the first day until I walked into the ring and through every minute of the fight," Brewster, 30-2 (27), said. "I did what I had to do. I haven't fought since March 2003 because of politics and wouldn't be here if it wasn't for Don King."

Klitschko, 42-3 (39), went to the hospital for observation after the fight. "It was not Wladimir Klitschko in there," said the fighter, whose camp indicated a belief that Klitschko had been drugged.

Television: HBO

Promoter: Don King Productions

(4-10-04)

Wayne McCullough

Lakva Sim KO 5 Miguel Callist

Las Vegas, Nevada: The bout on the Brewster-Klitschko/Spinks-Judah undercard to decide who would claim the WBA lightweight title vacated by Leonard Dorin turned out to be better than expected. Through most of the five rounds, Callist, 135, Colon, Panama, looked in command, but when Sim, 133½, Ulan Bator, Mongolia, unleashed his power, it proved to be the determining factor, and he claimed the vacant title by stoppage.

Sim was a former WBA super featherweight titleholder attempting to capture his second belt, but Callist, for the first couple of rounds, looked like he would prevent him from doing so. The taller of the two, Callist started strong, using his long southpaw jab to keep Sim at a distance. Sim, the only Mongolian ever to win a major alphabet title, was the aggressor, moving forward, but getting caught by Callist's sharp punches.

Callist, 17-4-1 (13), drew Sim in and let loose in the second, scoring at will with his powerful left uppercut. In the third, Sim, 19-3-1 (16), started to close the gap. For the first time in the fight, he stopped Callist from moving, landing vicious combinations that hurt his foe. With about 20 seconds to go, a right-left combination rocked Callist and it looked like Sim could finish it, but Callist rallied to finish the round well.

When the bell rang to begin the fourth Sim, 32, failed to take advantage of his success in the third, and Callist, 29, began to get back on track, using his long reach and counterpunching style to control the action.

But Sim came out and dominated the fifth. The tough, rugged Mongolian began to get home with his hard combinations. Both fighters landed solid left hooks at the start of the round, but Sim then landed powerful hooks to Callist's body and head that bent him over. Moments later, a flurry of punches and a double one-two combination dropped Callist for the first time in the fight. He got to his feet on shaky legs, and Sim took advantage of his wounded prey, landing another flurry of blows, leaving referee Toby Gibson (USA) with no choice but to step in and save Callist at 2:20 of the fifth.

At the time of the stoppage, Patricia Morse-Jarman (USA) had the fight even at 38-38, but Hubert Earle (Canada) saw it 40-36 for Callist and Dalby Shirley (USA) 39-37, also for Callist.

Television: HBO

Promoter: Don King Productions

(4-10-04)

Wayne McCullough

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Ruiz and Oquendo take a break from clinching to fire jabs

John Ruiz KO 11 Fres Oquendo

New York, New York: By the second round, it started to get entertaining—the chants from the crowd, that is. Oquendo and Ruiz, meanwhile, couldn't help but hug each other every chance they got. It was a pattern that seemed to continue endlessly before 15,195 disenchanted fans at Madison Square Garden.

Boos quickly descended, followed by shouts of "Get a room!", "We want Tyson!", and "We want Tyson, or anybody!" The only punch that landed with any consistency over the first 10 rounds was Oquendo's jab. Otherwise, Ruiz, 240, Methuen, Massachusetts, did what he normally does—grab and hold—and Oquendo, 222½, San Juan, Puerto Rico, played along and even initiated much of the holding.

Ruiz, however, broke up the hugfest late in the 11th round, starting with a straight right that stunned Oquendo, backing him into the ropes. "The Quietman" followed with a quick barrage of shots, compelling referee Wayne Kelly (USA) to step in and call a halt at 2:33 of the round, enabling Ruiz to retain the WBA heavyweight belt. A chorus of boos rained down on the ring, as many in the stands felt Kelly stopped the fight too quickly. After all, for the last three seconds or so, they'd finally been entertained.

"Oquendo said after the fight he was fine, and he was," said Kelly. "But if he took three more shots he wouldn't have been. It's my job to protect the safety of the fighters. He took five or six shots and failed to defend himself."

Oquendo, 24-3 (15), was understandably frustrated after the fight. The "Big O" had suffered his second straight controversial defeat. He was trying to rebound from a highly unpopular 12-round decision loss to IBF titlist Chris Byrd back on September 20, 2003.

"I don't know what I have to do to get a break, I really don't," said an angry Oquendo, 31, in his locker room. "I fought my ass off against Byrd, and everyone thought I won, and now this. That ref took the fight away from me. I want a rematch. I deserve it. That ref stopped a great fight."

Ruiz, 39-4-1 (28), was understandably pleased with the result. Despite his holding and wrestling, he led 96-94 on two scorecards, and was even on the third, 95-95, at the time of the stoppage.

"I want to unify the title," Ruiz, 32, said. "I will fight anyone."

But does anyone want to fight him?

Television: Pay-Per-View

Promoter: Don King Productions in association with Madison Square Garden and Fight Night

(4-17-04)

Joseph Santoliquito

Ricardo Mayorga W 10 Eric Mitchell

New York, New York: Showing the lack of discipline that has been his trademark on both sides of the ropes, former welterweight champion Mayorga blew an opportunity to win an alphabet belt against Jose Rivera by failing to make the 147-pound division limit. After some last-minute reshuffling, Mayorga was matched in a non-title bout against Mitchell, who was originally supposed to fight lower down the Madison Square Garden bill. Meanwhile, Rivera, who made weight, was removed from the card and given $50,000—$25,000 from Mayorga's purse and $25,000 from promoter Don King.

Mayorga, sporting bleached blond hair and a few extra wrinkles in his belly, fought his usual scrambling fight, awkwardly lunging in and swinging wildly from a wide assortment of angles. Mitchell, 155¾, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, did well the first two rounds, boxing carefully to the chanted sound of "We want Rivera" coming from the displaced fighter's rooting section.

Mayorga, 153½, began to connect with some clubbing rights in the fourth, and slowly pulled ahead of his overly cautious opponent the next few rounds. Mitchell fell further behind in the sixth when referee Arthur Mercante Jr. (USA) unnecessarily penalized him a point for holding and hitting. However, when Mayorga sunk a shot below his rival's belt later in the round, all he got was a warning.

Despite Mayorga's strutting bravado, it was far from an entertaining fight. Mitchell, 34, proved a good enough boxer to avoid

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Mayorga wings a left uppercut at Mitchell

getting knocked out, but played it too safe to spring an upset or help create much excitement. Mitchell, 16-4-1 (7), had a bright moment in the eighth, when he landed several crisp combinations. But overall, Mayorga, Managua, Nicaragua, was the busier and stronger fighter, and deserved the verdict, though not by the wide margins of 99-90, 98-91, and 97-92 handed in by American judges Luis Rivera, Glenn Feldman, and Tom Shreck, respectively. THE RING gave Mayorga a 96-94 edge.

"I was a little uncomfortable fighting him at first because he kept coming in with his head," said the 30-year-old Mayorga after improving his record to 26-4-1 (23). "He headbutted me a lot and was very strong, but it didn't matter because I knew I was going to beat him. I'm glad they found the fight tonight because I really wanted to fight."

Mayorga's weight may not be a factor in the future, as King has him penciled in for a match with comebacking Felix Trinidad in early-October, and "Tito" has let it be known that he'll be fighting as a middleweight.

Television: Pay-Per-View

Promoter: Don King Productions in association with Madison Square Garden and Fight Night

(4-17-04)

Nigel Collins

Wayne Braithwaite W 12 Louis Azille

New York, New York: In another featured bout on King's lengthy Garden party, WBC cruiserweight titleholder Braithwaite and challenger Azille hooked up in what started as an exhilarating shootout, but eventually fizzled into a fairly perfunctory affair. Both men expended so much energy during the first three rounds of frenzied action, it's little wonder that they grew weary as the fight dragged on to a unanimous decision in Braithwaite's favor.

Azille, 193¾, jumped on Braithwaite, 188, in the first round and shook him with a wicked left hook, as his shorter, more compact blows allowed him to get inside of "Big Truck's" wide shots. The defending titleholder, eager to establish authority, came out chucking bombs in the second and battered Azille with a prolonged barrage. But Azille hung tough and managed to plant a couple of good punches to prevent Braithwaite from overwhelming him.

Braithwaite, a native of Guyana now living in Brooklyn, New York, floored Azille in the opening moments of the third with a sizzling left hook to the head. Azille, originally from Dominica but fighting out of Jersey City, New Jersey, beat referee Ed Claudio's count and charged right back into the fray, eventually staggering Braithwaite with his own hook near the bell. It was a scintillating round, but a demanding one that drained a lot out of both.

The fourth, fifth, and sixth were comparatively dull. Braithwaite landed a lot of pitty-pat punches as Azille, 33, shuffled forward, but there were none of the thrilling exchanges that highlighted the first nine minutes of action.

The squat, muscular Azille, 18-3-2 (15), banged the body fairly well in the seventh, and there was a facsimile of the earlier fireworks in the eighth when both landed solidly. Twice in the ninth, Braithwaite stuck out his tongue after fielding a clean shot, which most likely meant he'd been buzzed.

The 28-year-old Braithwaite, 21-0 (17), used his legs to stay at long range for most of the 10th, as Azille continued to press. By then, however, most of the steam had gone out of both men's punches. Still, Braithwaite kept his hands moving and was the busier of the pair during the final two rounds.

The official scoring of the three American judges was far more one-sided than the fight. Billy Costello went totally overboard with a 120-107 tally for Braithwaite, which meant that he didn't give Azille even so much as an even round. Julie Lederman and Arthur Mercante Sr. also went big for Braithwaite, turning in scores of 119-108 and 118-107, respectively. THE RING made Braithwaite the winner by a much more competitive 116-112 margin.

"I hurt both my hands, but I really hurt my right hand in the third round when I hit him on the head," said Braithwaite after recording his third defense of the WBC belt. "I thought I had a good performance, but I would have been better if I didn't hurt my hands."

"He fought a good fight," admitted Azille. "I did good in the middle rounds, but I got tired toward the end. A few rounds I felt like I hurt him, but I just couldn't follow up."

Television: Pay-Per-View

Promoter: Don King Productions in association with Madison Square Garden and Fight Night

(4-17-04)

Nigel Collins

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Braithwaite would bounce back from this mouthpiece-dislodging hook to win

Sven Ottke W 12 Armand Krajnc

Magdeburg, Germany: It had followed the same pattern of so many of his fights, a display of dominance rather than destruction, a points win not always pleasing to the eye. At least this one was not mired in controversy. Ottke, 167½, Berlin, Germany, boxed consummately to claim

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Ottke handles Krajnc inside in his farewell fight

a unanimous decision victory over Krajnc, 166½, Landskrona, Sweden, and retain the IBF super middleweight title for the 21st time (and the WBA "super" title for the fourth time). Immediately after the decision was announced, he took the ring mike and announced his retirement with a perfect career record of 34-0 (6). Many in the crowd of 7,500 inside the Boerdeland Hall were overcome with emotion.

It was an emotional moment for Ottke, too. Many of his biggest wins had come in Magdeburg, including a controversial technical decision over Thomas Tate in 1999 and a rematch victory over Charles Brewer—from whom he claimed the IBF belt—in 2000. Just a couple of months shy of his 37th birthday, he decided that he had reached a natural end.

"I knew this was coming for a long time," Ottke said. "I was having more and more trouble with the hard training. Sometimes it's just time to call it quits. I am happy, very content. I have retired without ever being beaten. That's a very satisfying feeling, to leave at the top. Not many fighters in the history of the sport have ever done this."

Increasingly, Ottke was regarded as a titlist who was slipping. Joe Calzaghe, the Welshman who has recently jumped to light heavy, was the consensus number one, while the veteran German refused to fight him and clung on to his belts by virtue of dubious decisions, like the one he contrived to secure over Robin Reid last December. But the decision against Krajnc was never in doubt. Ottke bossed the bout the whole way. Krajnc, 30, came to the ring in full Viking dress, but not even Odin could grant him the skills or power to unseat the proud German beltholder on his valedictory night.

From the outset, Ottke had his jab working. He landed a good straight right, too, in the opening round and blocked the Swede's one-two combinations. A hard right in the second saw the challenger's knees dip and further encouraged Ottke. As the rounds went by, he did not look like so many champions sadly do on their last night inside the ropes.

"If you saw his performance today, it's sad," said his trainer, Uli Wegner, who is convinced that Ottke could have made even more defenses. "But it was his dream, and mine, for him to finish unbeaten, and I am happy he has."

By the midway point, Krajnc's face was heavily marked. He was taking a lot of punches. Ottke, though, has never been the biggest puncher or anywhere near it, so Krajnc, 29-3 (21), never looked like he was on his last legs. He might have quit for he was so far behind, but doggedly he battled on, even staging a mini-revival in the 11th round. But Ottke closed out his show with a commanding 12th, and the decision was clear cut in his favor. Judge Medardo Villalobos (Panama) scored it 120-108, Cesar Ramos (Puerto Rico) had it 120-110, and Manuel Maritxalar (Spain) saw it 119-109, the same as THE RING.

The referee was Armando Garcia.

Promoter: Wilfried Sauerland

(3-27-04)

Brian Doogan

Israel Vazquez KO 12 Jose Luis Valbuena

Los Angeles, California: Two years ago, Vazquez' first bid for a version of an alphabet title ended in a 12th-round stoppage loss. Against Valbuena at the Grand Olympic Auditorium, Vazquez, in his second attempt at a title, came out on the opposite end of a final-round kayo. It wasn't as thrilling as his defeat at the hands of Oscar Larios two years earlier, but it was still an entertaining, suspenseful bout, and it had a much happier ending for the 26-year-old Mexican, earning him the IBF junior featherweight belt that Manny Pacquiao left behind when he moved up to 126 pounds.

Valbuena, 33, was best known for his competitive decision defeat to Marco Antonio Barrera in 2000, but with the passing of time, his durability seems to have waned. Against Vazquez, the Venezuelan was knocked down in both the fourth and 12th rounds en route to having his six-fight post-Barrera winning streak halted.

The first round between these two top-five RING-rated junior feathers was an excellent one. Vazquez, 122, was hurt midway through the round by a quick flurry from his southpaw opponent, but he roared back and soon had Valbuena, 121, holding after a pair of rights slammed home. The slick Valbuena outboxed Vazquez for stretches in the second and third, but a minute into round four, a right to the chin dropped Valbuena on his rump, pushing the Mexican into the lead.

Valbuena had a chance to reclaim the momentum in the fifth, but what looked like a possible knockdown in his favor from a counterpunch was ruled a slip by referee James Jen-Kin (USA). Still, Valbuena jabbed his way to a successful sixth, and attacked to the body as well, seeming to hurt Vazquez. But when a few bodypunches strayed low in the seventh, an angry Vazquez tore into Valbuena with a heavy right that rocked the Venezuelan badly. Though Valbuena proved efficient in survival mode, it soon became clear that he was in decline, while Vazquez was growing stronger.

Vazquez doled out punishment steadily in the eighth and ninth, looking to finish his foe, but he was slowed by a low blow in round nine that took him off his feet and cost Valbuena a point. The deduction became immaterial a short while later. Just 11 seconds into round 12, Vazquez, 36-3 (27), scored with a long right hand that dropped Valbuena hard. There was too much time left on the clock for Valbuena, 24-3-1 (14), to have a chance, and

when the Mexican battered him with a right-left combo, Jen-Kin moved in and stopped the fight over the loud protests of the game Valbuena. The time was 34 seconds of the final round.

Television: HBO Latino

Promoter: Golden Boy Promotions

(3-25-04)

Ricky Hatton KO 6 Dennis Holbaek Pedersen

Manchester, England: Originally meant to be an intriguing assignment against unbeaten Brazilian powerpuncher Kelson Pinto, this became a straightforward exercise in removing the menace from Dennis, a Danish lightweight campaigning at junior welterweight for the first time. Frustrated by the Brazilian's withdrawal just three days prior to the fight—excuses ranged from his wife's pregnancy to contractual problems to severe flu—Hatton, 139¼, Manchester, England, put his disappointment to one side to systematically wear down the game but outgunned Pedersen, 140, Kolding, Denmark, in six rounds at the MEN Arena. Almost 16,000 supporters loved it, but it proved little and Hatton knew it.

His 29-year-old substitute opponent had gone the distance with Paul Spadafora for the IBF lightweight title, dropping a unanimous decision, but that was two years previous. He had boxed just once since, one month earlier in Spain, against the grandly named Sunday King Aderoju, who had lost his previous four bouts. Pedersen, therefore, was no real match. But Hatton's preparations had been affected by a hip injury sustained in sparring, and whether this would diminish his effectiveness presented something of a worry.

This doubt in his head initially dissuaded Hatton, 35-0 (26), from throwing his powershots, particularly with the right hand,

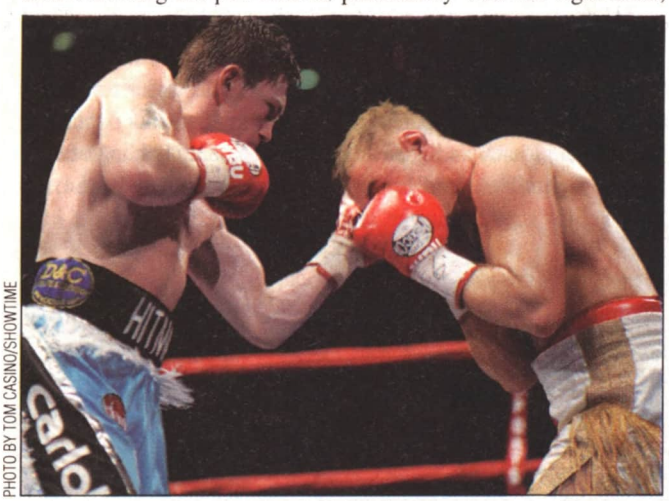

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Hatton had far too much for late sub Pedersen

with anything like the force of which he is capable. But his left hook was soon doing damage, slowing down his opponent, beginning the break-up job at which the Manchester "Hitman" excels. A couple of hard hooks sank into Pedersen's ribs in the second round, but he countered with a right to Hatton's head before Hatton responded with a right of his own that hurt the Dane.

It was the fourth round when Hatton really began to hit home hard, digging in a left hook to the body that put Pedersen down for a count of nine. A right to the head and another left to the ribs again floored Pedersen, 44-3 (23), before the bell came to his rescue.

Pedersen survived the fifth, but the wear was beginning to tell. When Hatton measured a right uppercut in the final minute of the sixth, the Dane was clearly hurt, and when he was nailed by the same punch seconds later, referee Dave Parris (England) picked the perfect moment to intervene at the 2:32 mark.

At 25, Hatton is approaching the height of his powers, underlined by his sound boxing display in outpointing Ben Tackie last December. But the big fights that are being talked about—and that he genuinely seems to yearn for—are not materializing. A proposed summer showdown with Sharmba Mitchell, who fought in the chief support, fell through, Hatton's camp blaming Mitchell's camp, and vice versa, for the failure to get it on. Certainly, greater tests than the one presented by Pedersen must now be demanded of the unbeaten Mancunian.

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Sports Network

(4-3-04)

Brian Doogan

Sharmba Mitchell W 12 Mike Stewart

Manchester, England: Having struggled against Lovemore Ndou in his previous fight when he had prepared for a world title rematch with Kostya Tszyu, who pulled out through injury, Mitchell, 139, Takoma Park, Maryland, was determined to show that he is still a force at junior welterweight. Three knockdowns and a lopsided decision over Stewart, 139½, Newcastle, Delaware, proved fairly impressive in the chief support to Hatton-Pedersen at the MEN Arena, but whether he eradicated all the doubts is another matter.

At 33, Mitchell remains a highly skilled practitioner. Fast hands and nimble feet are still his forte. The power was evident, too, as he floored his able-chinned foe three times and never really allowed the challenger in this IBF "interim" title bout to find his stride. Yet, for all his superiority, he was unable to put "No Joke" Stewart away, embarrassed himself at times with wild misses, and even managed to get buzzed on a few occasions when he left himself open to Stewart's counters.

Mitchell admitted to being "lackadaisical" in his February bout with Ndou and he came out fully concentrated to meet the 26-year-old Stewart. Speed was the key. Seven years older, Mitchell, 54-3 (30), was much faster. His southpaw jab worked well and he zapped in his left cross at will, knocking Stewart down with sharp application of his left in the fourth. But he demonstrated some defensive deficiencies, too, taking a left hook when the action resumed that seemed to hurt him. Before the round was over, however, Stewart was nailed again by a hard left uppercut.

Stewart had been cut under the left eye in the second round, and his face became heavily marked long before the finish. He was floored again in the fifth, another left by Mitchell doing the damage, but the man from Maryland could not put together a spectacular finish. This began to frustrate him. On a number of occasions, he could be heard criticizing himself after missing shots.

He did get through with yet another left in the ninth that put Stewart down for a third time, and his boxing overall made him comfortably the superior fighter. But Mitchell was looking for

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Stewart eats a Mitchell uppercut

something more, an emphatic statement. Stewart, 35-2-2 (19), dug in, however, to last the course.

Dave Parris (England) scored 117-109, Roy Francis (England) 120-106, and Howard Foster (USA) 120-105, all for Mitchell. THE RING saw it 119-106. The referee was Ian John-Lewis (England).

"I made easy work tonight," said Mitchell. "I just wanted to show my fans I have it all together again."

Television: Showtime

Promoter: Sports Newtwork

(4-3-04)

Brian Doogan

Monte Barrett W 10 Dominick Guinn

Little Rock, Arkansas: It isn't easy being an up-and-coming heavyweight these days. Two weeks after Joe Mesi barely survived blown-up cruiserweight Vassiliy Jirov, and two weeks before Wladimir Klitschko got pounded out of contention by Lamon Brewster, Guinn, the least tainted prospect of them all coming in, lost listlessly to veteran Barrett. Maybe the almost-hometown crowd at the Alltel Arena (Guinn is from nearby Hot Springs, Arkansas) affected him. Certainly the first-rate performance of the hungry Barrett was a factor. But if Guinn was what he hoped he'd be, Barrett's best wasn't supposed to be enough to beat him, even on an off-night for "The Southern Disaster." Apparently, Guinn, thanks to a complete lack of fire in the belly, just isn't what we hoped he'd be.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Barrett unloads on disappointing Guinn

From the early rounds, it seemed clear that Barrett, 218, Queens, New York, wanted it more. While Guinn, 221, pumped a fairly steady jab, Barrett was the one putting authority on his punches. One right to the body in the third round stood out, and Guinn paused for a moment afterward, clearly feeling the blow. The 28-year-old Guinn came back in the fourth, however, to wobble Barrett with a right hand, but the undefeated favorite either didn't realize Barrett was shaken, or simply didn't feel like opening up. Whatever the case, the moment quickly passed.

With the moderately paced fight running close through six rounds (if anybody was a little bit ahead, it was Barrett), the contest finally got interesting in the seventh. As Guinn missed with a hook, Barrett, 32, connected with a flush hook at the same moment, staggering The Southern Disaster. Barrett pounced, but Guinn, showing the poise one gains in a 300-fight amateur career, tied him up and nullified his offense. "Two Gunz" kept firing, though, and eventually broke through with a left hook and a right uppercut, leaving Guinn badly hurt. But Barrett couldn't find the punches to put the Arkansan down, and by the end of the round, Barrett seemed slightly punched out, while Guinn showed he'd recuperated by flashing a half-hearted Ali shuffle.

With the zero at the end of his record obviously in danger of disappearing, Guinn won the eighth—primarily because Barrett needed a rest round, not because Guinn was showing the necessary fire. In the final two rounds, Guinn, 24-1 (17), did nothing but disappoint, allowing Barrett, 30-3 (16), to outhustle him en route to doing an Ali shuffle of his own with five seconds left on the clock. The celebratory dance was well-deserved, despite the ridiculous scoring of judge Sonny Ingram (USA), who had Guinn ahead 96-94. Ingram was thankfully overruled by Elmo Adolph (USA) and Gale Van Hoy (USA), who both scored it 97-93 for Barrett, the same as THE RING.

The referee was Russell Naquin (USA).

Television: HBO

Promoters: DiBella Entertainment, Main Events

(3-27-04)

Fabrice Tiozzo W 12 Silvio Branco

Lyon, France: The first little miracle was in him getting into shape. Then he showed that he could still fight. Two months shy of his 35th birthday and four years after being felled three times in one round by Virgil Hill to lose the WBA cruiserweight title, Tiozzo, 174¼, St. Denis, France, survived a knockdown in the eighth round and rallied to floor Branco, 173¾, Civitavecchia, Italy, in the 11th and capture a majority decision at the Palais des Sports de Gerland. It was Branco's first defense of a belt he won last October against Mehdi Sahnoune.

PHOTO BY PHILIPPE MERLE/AFP/GETTY IMAGES

Tiozzo celebrates a crucial late knockdown against Branco

Tiozzo had looked finished as an elite performer when he was destroyed in a single round by Hill. It was certainly beyond expectation that he could win a title at light heavy again nine years after he produced the performance of his life to outpoint "The Bodysnatcher," Hall of Famer Mike McCallum, to win the WBC light heavyweight belt. In the last couple of years he had taken on the look of the present-day McCallum and had to drop 55 pounds in five months just to make weight to challenge Branco.

At 37, the Italian was perhaps feeling the wear and tear of a 16-year career. But he did retain the speed and accuracy of his left jab and demonstrated some of the boxing skills that have made him a useful performer over the years. Tiozzo, however, showed a willingness to engage that belied his recent inactivity, and over the course of the first six rounds it became clear that the fight would be close all the way.

In the seventh, Branco, 49-7-2 (30), was outworked and hurt and gained some valuable respite when his cornerman, Salvatore Cherchi, worked on the tape that had come undone on one of his gloves. But he responded in the eighth, staggering Tiozzo with a one-two combination, then getting through again with his jab and a follow-up right before a solid left-right finally put the Frenchman down for an eight-count by referee Guillermo Perez (Panama), who did not admonish the Italian for a couple of cuffing rights to the head while Tiozzo was on the floor.

The ninth was another good round for Branco, but Tiozzo showed spirit to bounce back in the 10th. And in the 11th, Branco slipped twice onto the canvas before he was felled legitimately, Tiozzo gaining a valuable two-point round courtesy of a right hand to the head. Branco was still in trouble in the final round, which Tiozzo won, too, persuading judges Glenn Feldman (USA) and Garcia Reyes (Spain) to score in his favor, 114-112. Judge Cesar Ramos (Puerto Rico) scored it a draw, 113-113. THE RING had Tiozzo winning, 114-112.

"I believed I could be champion again and now I am," said Tiozzo, 46-2 (30). "This is a wonderful feeling."

Promoter: AB Stars

(3-20-04)

Brian Doogan

In Jin Chi KO 7 Michael Brodie

Manchester, England: The first meeting of these warriors, in October 2003, was a serious contender for Fight of the Year. Brodie, 126, Manchester, England, rallied furiously from a knockdown and near-capitulation in the second round to go toe-to-toe with the freakishly strong and tall Chi, 125½, Seoul, South Korea, for the remainder of a compelling bout that ended in a controversial draw. But the reservoir of courage and spirit that he drew on then had run dry by the time they slugged it out for a second time. Brodie never really recovered from a knockdown in the first before being felled for the count in the seventh as Chi claimed the vacant WBC featherweight title at the MEN Arena.

It had seemed too great a demand to make of the 29-year-old Brodie, 35-2-1 (23), that he could somehow dig down so deep again. The 30-year-old Chi, 28-2-1 (17), is as awkward as he is big and brawny, a lightweight or more contained in a featherweight's frame. He demonstrated his pedigree when troubling Erik Morales throughout their 12-round fight in 2001 in Los Angeles and he returned to Manchester to claim what he believed he had been denied when the decision that originally went his way in the first fight with Brodie was overturned to a draw. He had resolved to dispensing with the judges' use this time.

A right hand to the temple had Brodie on his knees in the opening round. It seemed to confirm dark thoughts in his head while boosting Chi's considerable confidence. From this point he was never able to gain a foothold in the fight, getting nailed too often by Chi's remorseless, two-fisted assault, having little success with anything he tried himself.

Brodie did draw blood from above the Korean's left eye in the fourth, but Italian referee Massimo Barrovecchio correctly ruled the wound was inflicted with Brodie's head and docked him a point in accordance with WBC rules. Chi remained unruffled—despite the controversy caused last time when ref Daniel Van De Wiele took a point off Brodie's total for an accidental clash of heads in the opening round—and continued to do damage to the hometown fighter with heavy hooks and crosses.

Brodie was in trouble again at the end of the sixth, managing to survive on his wits, but the beating he was taking was merci-

PHOTO BY ALEX LIVESEY/GETTY IMAGES

Chi bashes Brodie with a right hand

less. Chi was determined that there would be no doubt at the second time of asking. He maintained his furious pressure in the seventh, put together a wicked combination, and ended it with a left uppercut that put Brodie down on all fours. The Manchester man had nothing left and was counted out at the 2:48 mark.

"I thought this time I was going to do it and I'm disappointed for the fans. But he was better on the night," said Brodie. "I tried boxing him, but he caught me with a good uppercut. That's boxing. He is a tough man and a good fighter. But I'll be back again. I have still got loads left in me and will come back stronger."

Promoter: Barry Hearn

(4-10-04)

Brian Doogan

Daniel Reyes KO 3 Roberto Leyva

Cartagena, Colombia: It was three years ago that Leyva outpointed Reyes in Queens, New York, to claim the vacant IBF mini flyweight title, and apparently, three years can make quite a difference. When they met in a rematch at the Hilton Hotel de Bocagrande, it was Reyes who came in wearing the strap that Leyva had once beaten him for, and it was Reyes who left having proven clear superiority.

Leyva, 24, just isn't the fighter he used to be, having never recovered it seems from the beating he took in losing his belt in a 12-round classic against Miguel Barrera in '02. The southpaw Leyva was crushed by Barrera in three rounds in their rematch, and Reyes achieved just as quick a stoppage, pounding out a third-round TKO win over what's left of the Mexican ex-titlist.

Reyes, meanwhile, appears to have improved significantly since his lone career loss, having gone 8-0 (8) with a technical draw between the two Leyva fights. The 31-year-old Colombian claimed the IBF title by crushing Edgar Cardenas (the man who had taken the title from Barrera), and his first defense was just as easy. Reyes, 105, floored Leyva, 105, twice in the third round, prompting referee Manuel Rodriguez to call a halt to the one-sided bout.

The win elevated Reyes' record to 34-1-1 (29), while "Mako" Leyva skidded to 22-3-1 (19).

(4-10-04)

Vivian Harris W 12 Oktay Urkal

Berlin, Germany: Traveling to Germany to win a decision is a task that comes with no guarantees. In fact, the likelihood is always that the home fighter will be heavily favored, especially if your first name is Sven and your second Ottke. But boldness is rewarded sometimes, and it was here as Harris, 139½, Brooklyn, New York, via Guyana, just did enough in a competitive fight with European titleholder Urkal, 139½, Berlin, Germany, via Turkey, to retain the second-rate, non-"super" version of the WBA super lightweight title by majority decision at the Max Schmeling Halle.

The difficulty of Harris' mission was increased by the fact that Urkal, seeking to become the first Turkish-born fighter ever to win a version of a "world" title, is an accomplished boxer, slick, determined, resilient, and confident in his ability. This chance, which he knew at age 34 could be his last at this level, was never going to awe him. Three years ago at the Mohegan Sun Casino in Connecticut, he went the distance with world champion Kostya Tszyu. He fought with a broken jaw sustained during the fight and the decision was quite close.

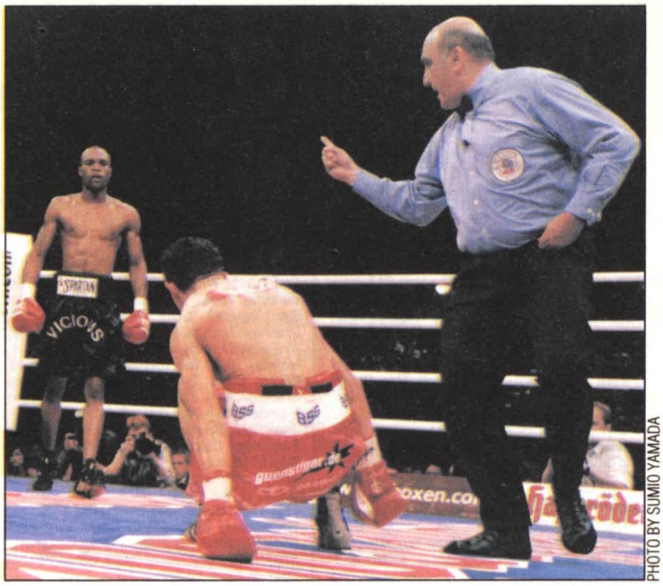

PHOTO BY SUMIO YAMADA

Harris' third-round knockdown of Urkal would prove the difference

Harris knew, therefore, that his older opponent and the assignment in general was definitely not to be taken lightly. The 25-year-old realized that he would have to box well, and he did, gutting it out when he needed to, overcoming the handicap of a deducted point in the eighth round for punching low. His positive start, underpinned by solid, stiff blows that caught Urkal coming in during the opening couple of rounds, was followed up in round three with a powerful right hand that caught the hometown favorite on the chin and knocked him to the floor. Urkal, 34-2 (11), beat the count of South African referee Stanley Christodoulou and seemed freshly resolved as he rose.

For the next few rounds, Urkal used his guile and speed to take the play away from Harris, who might have been expecting after his breakthrough in the third round to be in for an early night. Urkal closed the gap in distance and in points, catching Harris with several meaty punches before the Guyanan had a point deducted from his total in round eight for repeated low blows.

But Harris began to pick his punches more accurately in the 10th, a big round for him in which Urkal was reduced to banging his chest to prove that he could take Harris' best shots. He did, but it was Harris who was piling up the points. Urkal seemed troubled by a bloodied nose over the final two rounds, and Harris, who had conserved more energy, was able to pull out a close win.

Judges Gustavo Padilla (Mexico) and Cesar Ramos (Puerto Rico) both had it 114-112, and Jose Martinez (Spain) scored it a 113-113 draw. THE RING scored for Harris, 114-112.

"It was a tough fight. I hit him with some good rights and he just kept coming back," said Harris, 24-1-1 (16). Miguel Cotto, the unbeaten and explosive Puerto Rican puncher, is a possible challenge to be faced by Harris before the end of the year.

Promoter: Wilfried Sauerland

(4-17-04)

Brian Doogan ■

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New Face

(Continued from page 24)

"Boxing just became like a job and it wasn't fun anymore. In the inner city, the American dream is to sell drugs and succeed. That's the mentality of those kids. If it's not basketball or football to get out, it's drugs, and it's sad. I fell victim a little bit."

Though his grandfather tried to steer him toward following the Hoye boxing tradition, there was also a darker family history. Two of Hoye's uncles are currently in prison: Dwayne Harris, for murder, and Frank Hoye, for armed robbery and murder. Rico was leaning toward that route. After his grandfather was hospitalized with a stroke, Hoye strayed from the discipline of his grandfather's supervision, and for 30 days he hung out on the streets, with disastrous results.

It all started with a look from a kid Hoye had never met before. Hoye and the kid, Elroy (Hoye doesn't remember his last name), had words earlier in the day, when Elroy showed Hoye he was carrying a gun. Accompanied by two friends, Elroy confronted Hoye later that same day.

"What happened was very stupid," Hoye admitted. "That's the way I saw it. It was unfortunate the way it happened, and how it happened, but it was life-threatening. They were seriously trying to hurt me. Previously in the day, me and the kid had words, and he threatened me with a gun. That's what forced me to get a gun myself, to defend myself.

"I wasn't into the street game that deep. Me and this guy, our eyes just met and that clicked something. He basically wanted to shoot me because I was staring at him. It was very dumb. When I look back at it, I'm kind of ashamed of it. I was that hot-headed."

An altercation erupted between Hoye and the three kids. Hoye said he was struck on the head with a bat, temporarily blacked out, and got up firing his gun. Bullets hit Elroy and killed him.

The Detroit District Attorney's office wanted to throw a life sentence at Hoye, but Hoye didn't want to risk a trial and opted instead for a plea bargain, agreeing to serve 10 to 20 years. At 16, Hoye was shipped to the Michigan Reformatory, in Iona.

"That place was like hell on earth," Hoye said. "You walk in and you see rows and rows of bars and cages. They went up four stories high and there was constant screaming and people yelling, and the first thing you immediately think of is survival. That was the first thing on my mind. I was afraid. If I wasn't afraid, I wouldn't be human. Some of the best and worst people you can meet are in that place.

"You hope there are people that you might know from the neighborhood in there to watch your back. But when you hear that door shut, reality sets in. There aren't words to describe that. That was my world for 10 years, and for a 16-year-old kid, 10 years is like forever. I met kids in there who had 50- to 100-year sentences, and it started to look better for me."

That's when boxing started to take hold in Hoye's life again. He began running and lifting. He was so dedicated, Hoye bulked up to 230 pounds, and was able to bench press 315 pounds. But his imprisonment stung his family, particularly his father and grandfather. During his stay, both died.

"My father took it hard," Hoye said. "He took it harder than me, actually. He kept reassuring me that this wasn't the end of the world. When I lost my father and grandfather, my whole world caved in. For me, it was very hard to deal with not being there. What helped me get through is that I kept getting family support. When I'm in that ring, I can feel the presence of my father and my grandfather. That's who I fight for today: Elroy, the kid I killed, and my father and grandfather."

Hoye also fights for trainer Danny Smith and promoter Gary Shaw. Both like Hoye's attitude and work ethic, and both feel by later this year or early next year, Hoye will be ready for a title shot. He's already scored surprisingly quick knockouts over respected foes Segundo Mercado (KO 1), Etienne Whitaker (KO 2), and Donnell Wiggins (KO 1). Just before this magazine went to press, Hoye signed for a dangerous alphabet title eliminator against fellow kayo artist Richard Hall.

"Rico's mentality is very strong," Smith said. "He knows what he wants. You must knock him out or kill him to win. He has height, reach, speed. He reminds me of a more elusive Tommy Hearns. I would like to see a little more head movement from him, and for him to consistently keep his distance. They're my main concerns. But there's nothing at all that will intimidate Rico in that ring."

Shaw also compared Hoye to Hearns.

"I'm not sure Rico knows how good he is," Shaw said. "Some fighters carry an arrogance to themselves, and Rico hasn't seen his own talent yet. When he sees how talented he is, it will be a whole different story."

It is already a much different story for Hoye. The guns he carries now are concealed inside boxing gloves. ■

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Hoye needed just one round to stop Wiggins

ALPHABET RATINGS

The Rankings of Boxing's Three International Governing Bodies

WBA RATINGS

(Ratings as of March 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: John Ruiz (USA)
1. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
2. Corrie Sanders (SA)
3. Wladimir Klitschko (UKR)
4. Hasim Rahman (USA)
5. David Tua (NZ)
6. James Toney (USA)
7. Joe Mesi (USA)
8. Lance Whitaker (USA)
9. Nicolay Valuev (RUS)
10. Lamon Brewster (USA)
11. Evander Holyfield (USA)
12. Fres Oquendo (PR)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Jean Marc Mormeck (FRA)
1. Valery Brudov (RUS)
2. Vacant
3. Virgil Hill (USA)
4. O'Neil Bell (USA)
5. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
6. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
7. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
8. Guillermo Jones (PAN)
9. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
10. Dale Brown (CAN)
11. Luis Pineda (PAN)
12. Kelvin Davis (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
Champ: Fabrice Tiozzo (FRA)
1. Dariusz Michalczewski (GER)
2. Antonio Tarver (USA)
3. Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
4. Silvio Branco (ITA)
5. George Jones (USA)
6. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
7. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
8. Bruno Girard (FRA)
9. Stipe Drews (CRO)
10. Hugo Hernan Garay (ARG)
11. Danny Batchelder (USA)
12. Paul Murdoch (AUSTRL)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Sven Ottke (GER)
Champ: Anthony Mundine (AUSTRL)
1. Manuel Siaca (PR)
2. Mads Larsen (DEN)
3. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
4. Jeff Lacy (USA)
5. Antwun Echols (USA)
6. Byron Mitchell (USA)
7. Brian Magee (GB)
8. Danilo Haussler (GER)
9. Nordin Ben-Salah (NETH)
10. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
11. Charles Brewer (USA)
12. Mario Veit (GER)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Vacant
2. Bert Schenk (GER)
3. Robert Allen (USA)
4. Maselino Masoe (AUSTRL)
5. Evans Ashira (DEN)
6. Jermain Taylor (USA)
7. Kingsley Ikeke (NIG)
8. Howard Eastman (GB)
9. William Joppy (USA)
10. Marcos Silvano Diaz (ARG)
11. Kelly Pavlik (USA)
12. Raymond Joval (NETH)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Winky Wright (USA)
Champ: Travis Simms (USA)
1. Oscar De La Hoya (USA)
2. Fernando Vargas (USA)
3. Kassim Ouma (GHA)
4. Shane Mosley (USA)
5. Alejandro Garcia (MEX)
6. Rhoshii Wells (USA)
7. Verno Phillips (USA)
8. Santiago Samaniego (PAN)
9. Mamadou Thiam (FRA)
10. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
11. J.C. Candelo (COL)
12. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)
Champ: Jose Rivera (USA)
1. Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
2. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
3. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
4. Vernon Forrest (USA)
5. Michael Trabant (GER)
6. Kermit Cintron (PR)
7. Farhad Bakirov (UZB)
8. Teddy Reid (USA)
9. Chris Smith (USA)
10. Cosme Rivera (MEX)
11. Ishe Smith (USA)
12. Carlos Quintana (PR)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Champ: Vivian Harris (GUY)
1. Miguel Cotto (PR)
2. Ricky Hatton (GB)
3. Oktay Urkal (TUR)
4. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
5. Andreas Kotelnik (GER)
6. Carlos Maussa (COL)
7. Diobelys Hurtado (CUB)
8. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
9. Souleyman M'Baye (FRA)
10. DeMarcus Corley (USA)
11. Kelson Pinto (BRA)
12. Masakazu Satake (JAP)

LIGHTWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Miguel Callist (PAN)
2. Juan Lazcano (USA)
3. Lakva Sim (MON)
4. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
5. Julio Diaz (MEX)
6. Michael Clark (USA)
7. Courtney Burton (USA)
8. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
9. Billy Irwin (CAN)
10. Juan Diaz (USA)
11. Pedro Miranda (SPA)
12. Artur Grigorian (UZB)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS
Champ: Yodsanan Nanthachai (THAI)
1. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
2. Randy Suico (PHIL)
3. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
4. Janos Nagy (HUN)
5. Michael Gomez (GB)
6. Nobuhito Honmo (JAP)
7. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
8. Mike Anchondo (USA)
9. Vicente Mosquera (PAN)
10. Edwin Valero (VEN)
11. Mzonke Fana (SA)
12. Pongsith Wianwiset (THAI)

FEATHERWEIGHTS
Unified Champ: Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)
Champ: Chris John (INDO)
1. Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)
2. Injin Chi (KOR)
3. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
4. Derrick Gainer (USA)
5. Michael Brodie (GB)
6. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
7. Spend Abazi (DEN)
8. Osamu Sato (JAP)
9. Victor Polo (COL)
10. Oscar Leon (COL)
11. Orlando Salido (MEX)
12. Zahir Raheem (USA)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Mahyar Monshipour (FRA)
1. Yoddamrong Sithyodthong (THAI)
2. Somsak Sithchachawan (THAI)
3. Tim Austin (USA)
4. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
5. Yober Ortega (VEN)
6. Paulie Ayala (USA)
7. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
8. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
9. Alejandro Barrera (MEX)
10. Shoji Kimura (JAP)
11. Jorge Linares (VEN)
12. Daniel Ponce-DeLeon (MEX)

BANTAMWEIGHTS
Champ: Johnny Bredahl (DEN)
1. Julio Zarate (MEX)
2. Poongsawat Krachingdaen (THAI)
3. Diego Morales (MEX)
4. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
5. Jun Toriumi (JAP)
6. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
7. Leo Gamez (VEN)
8. Wladimir Sidorenko (UKR)
9. Ricardo Cordova (PAN)
10. Hideki Todaka (JAP)
11. Nobuaki Naka (JAP)
12. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Alexander Munoz (VEN)
1. Martin Castillo (MEX)
2. Eric Morel (USA)
3. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
4. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
5. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
6. Jose Navarro (USA)
7. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
8. Rogelio Galicia (PHIL)
9. Luis Bolano (COL)
10. Felix Machado (VEN)
11. Kormith Eveready (THAI)
12. Reynaldo Lopez Brown (COL)

FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Lorenzo Parra (VEN)
1. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
2. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
3. Denkaosaen Kaowitch (THAI)
4. Brian Viloria (USA)
5. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
6. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
7. Cyril Bellanger (FRA)
8. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
9. Angel Priolo (COL)
10. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
11. Damaen Kelly (GB)
12. Cristian Mijares (MEX)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS
Champ: Rosendo Alvarez (NIC)
1. Bebis Mendoza (COL)
2. Pichit C. Siriwat (THAI)
3. Edgar Velasquez (VEN)
4. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
5. Roberto Vazquez (PAN)
6. Masato Hatakeyama (JAP)
7. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
8. Fahlan Sakkreerin (THAI)
9. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)
10. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
11. Nerys Espinoza (NIC)
12. Manuel Vargas (MEX)

MINIMUMWEIGHTS
Champ: Noel Arambulet (VEN)
1. Juan Landaeta (VEN)
2. Chana Porpaoin (THAI)
3. Heriberto Gejon (PHIL)
4. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
5. Sithembele Kibiti (SA)
6. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
7. Pornsawan Pramuk (THAI)
8. Yutaka Niida (JAP)
9. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
10. Genki Onaka (JAP)
11. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
12. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)

WBC RATINGS

(Ratings as of March 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Vacant
1. Vitali Klitschko (UKR)
2. Corrie Sanders (SA)
3. Joe Mesi (USA)
4. Juan Carlos Gomez (CUB)
5. James Toney (USA)
6. Hasim Rahman (USA)
7. David Tua (NZ)
8. Mike Tyson (USA)
9. Eliecer Castillo (CUB)
10. Jameel McCline (USA)
11. Henry Akinwande (NIG)
12. Vassiliy Jirov (KAZ)
13. Faruq Saleem (USA)
14. Owen Beck (JAM)
15. Monte Barrett (USA)
16. Dominick Guinn (USA)
17. Derrick Jefferson (USA)
18. Luan Krasniqi (GER)
19. Oleg Maskaev (UZB)
20. Lance Whitaker (USA)
21. Kirk Johnson (CAN)
22. Timo Hoffman (GER)
23. Jeremy Williams (USA)
24. Dennis Bakhtov (KAZ)
25. Sinan Samil San (TUR)
26. Michael Sprott (GB)
27. Marcelo Dominguez (ARG)
28. Samuel Peter (NIG)
29. Peter Okhello (UGA)
30. Kevin McBride (IRE)

CRUISERWEIGHTS
Champ: Wayne Braithwaite (GUY)
1. O'Neil Bell (USA)
2. Pietro Aurino (ITA)
3. Dale Brown (CAN)
4. Rydell Booker (USA)
5. Rudiger May (GER)
6. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
7. Pavel Melkomian (RUS)
8. Krysztov Wlodarczyk (POL)
9. Carl Thompson (GB)
10. Glen Kelly (AUSTRL)
11. Luis Andres Pineda (PAN)
12. Virgil Hill (USA)
13. Kelvin Davis (USA)
14. Louis Azille (DR)
15. Vincenzo Rossitto (ITA)
16. Valery Brudov (RUS)
17. Sebastiaan Rothman (SA)
18. Richard LaMontagne (USA)
19. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
20. Felix Cora (USA)
21. Ezra Sellers (USA)
22. Baldwin Hlongwane (SA)
23. Thomas Hansvoll (NOR)
24. Alexander Petkovic (GER)
25. Mark Hobson (GB)
26. Michael Simms (USA)
27. Daniel Rowsell (AUSTRL)
28. Jorge Kahwagi (MEX)
29. Mauro Ordiales (ARG)
30. James Elizalde (USA)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS
Champ: Roy Jones (USA)
1. Antonio Tarver (USA)
2. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
3. Stipe Drews (CRO)
4. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
5. Dariusz Michalczewski (GER)
6. Jesus Ruiz (MEX)
7. Tomasz Adamek (POL)
8. Elvir Muriqi (ALB)
9. George Jones (USA)
10. Julio Gonzalez (MEX)
11. Rico Hoye (USA)
12. Dan Batchelder (USA)
13. Kamel Amrane (FRA)
14. Matthew Barney (GB)
15. Daniel Judah (USA)
16. Orlando Rivera (PR)
17. Jorge Castro (ARG)
18. Laudelino Barros (BRA)
19. Eric Harding (USA)
20. Montell Griffin (USA)
21. Silvio Branco (ITA)
22. Robert Stieglitz (GER)
23. Hugo Garay (ARG)
24. Mehdi Sahnoune (FRA)
25. Donnell Wiggins (USA)
26. Peter Oboh (GB)
27. Troy Weaver (USA)
28. Sergey Karanevich (RUS)
29. Adrian Diaconu (CAN)
30. Prince Badi Ajamu (USA)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Markus Beyer (GER)
Interim Champ: Danny Green (AUSTRL)
1. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
2. Eric Lucas (CAN)
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Danilo Haussler (GER)
5. Jeff Lacy (USA)
6. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
7. Charles Brewer (USA)
8. Scott Pemberton (USA)
9. Brian Magee (GB)
10. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
11. Kabary Salem (EGY)
12. Rudy Markussen (DEN)
13. Antwun Echols (USA)
14. Robin Reid (GB)
15. Nader Hamdan (AUSTRL)
16. Henry Porras (CR)
17. Otis Grant (CAN)
18. Mario Veit (GER)
19. Jean Paul Mendy (FRA)
20. Enrique Ornelas (USA)
21. Andre Thysse (SA)
22. Librado Andrade (USA)
23. Willie Stewart (USA)
24. Victor Oganov (RUS)
25. Carmine Tufano (USA)
26. Vitaly Tsypko (UKR)
27. Manny Siaca (PR)
28. Charles Adamu (GHA)
29. Jerry Elliott (NIG)
30. Jackson Chanet (FRA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)
1. Howard Eastman (GB)
2. Cristian Sanavia (ITA)
3. Jermain Taylor (USA)
4. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
5. Evans Ashira (KEN)
6. Kingsley Ikeke (CAN)
7. Sam Soliman (AUSTRL)
8. Eric Mitchell (USA)
9. Robert Allen (USA)
10. Raymond Joval (HOL)
11. Sergey Tatevosyan (RUS)
12. Quentin Smith (USA)
13. Epifanio Mendoza (COL)
14. Jorge Sendra (SPA)
15. Bert Schenk (GER)
16. Mariano Carrera (ARG)
17. Kelly Pavlik (USA)
18. Leonard Pierre Anastan (HAI)
19. Yoshihiro Araki (JAP)
20. Willie Gibbs (USA)
21. Wayne Alexander (GB)
22. Morrade Hakkar (FRA)
23. Daniel Edouard (USA)
24. Chad Dawson (USA)
25. Marcos Silvano Diaz (ARG)
26. Alexey Chirkov (RUS)
27. James Obedi Toney (GHA)
28. Tokutaro Toyozumi (JAP)
29. Jesse Brinkley (USA)
30. Troy Rowland (USA)

SUPER WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Winky Wright (USA)
Interim Champ: Javier Castillejo (SPA)
1. Fernando Vargas (USA)
2. Shane Mosley (USA)
3. Kassim Ouma (USA)
4. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
5. Sergio Martinez (ARG)
6. Sergei Dzindziruk (UKR)
7. Marco Antonio Rubio (MEX)
8. Alex Bunema (USA)
9. Kofi Jantuah (GHA)
10. Michele Piccirillo (ITA)
11. J.C. Candelo (COL)
12. Tokunbo Olajide (CAN)
13. Toshiharu Kaneyama (JAP)
14. Raul Marquez (USA)
15. Aslan Kodzoev (RUS)
16. Jamie Moore (GB)
17. Verno Phillips (USA)
18. Nobuhiro Hishida (JAP)
19. Richard Williams (GB)
20. Alejandro Garcia (MEX)
21. Mihaly Kotai (HUN)
22. Fitz Vanderpool (CAN)
23. Christophe Canclaux (FRA)
24. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)
25. Anderson Clayton (BRZ)
26. Jimmy Colas (FRA)
27. Mehrdud Takaloo (GB)
28. Rodney Jones (USA)
29. Joachim Alcine (CAN)
30. Jose Luis Zertuche (MEX)

WELTERWEIGHTS
Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)
1. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
2. Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
3. Vernon Forrest (USA)
4. Carlos Baldomir (ARG)
5. Manuel Gomez (MEX)
6. Miguel Rodriguez (MEX)
7. Hiroshi Watanabe (JAP)
8. Miguel Angel Gonzalez (MEX)
9. Christophe Henry (BAR)
10. Ishe Smith (USA)
11. Jose Luis Cruz (MEX)
12. Alpaslam Aguzum (TUR)
13. Teddy Reid (USA)
14. Jawaid Khaliq (GB)
15. Michel Trabant (GER)
16. Rafael Pineda (COL)
17. Kermit Cintron (USA)
18. Frederic Klose (FRA)
19. Sebastian Lujan (ARG)
20. Christian Bladt (DEN)
21. Joseph Makaringe (SA)
22. Farkhad Bakirov (UZB)
23. Rev Santillan (PHIL)
24. Michele Orlando (ITA)
25. Randall Bailey (USA)
26. James Hare (GB)
27. Chris Smith (USA)
28. Joshua Clottey (GHA)
29. Carlos Quintana (PR)
30. Raul Bejarano (ARG)

SUPER LIGHTWEIGHTS
Emeritus Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Champ: Arturo Gatti (CAN)
1. Leonard Dorin (CAN)
2. Gianluca Branco (ITA)
3. Miguel Cotto (PR)
4. Paul Spadafora (USA)
5. Ricky Hatton (GB)
6. James Leija (USA)
7. Francisco Bojado (MEX)
8. Terrance Cauthen (USA)
9. Cosme Rivera (MEX)
10. Lovemore Ndou (SA)
11. Carlos Maussa (COL)
12. Junior Witter (GB)
13. Juan Valenzuela (MEX)
14. DeMarcus Corley (USA)
15. Juan Urango (COL)
16. Masakazu Satake (JAP)

17. Victor Kpadenue (GHA)
18. Wilfredo Vilches (ARG)
19. Jungbum Kim (KOR)
20. Juan Carlos Rodriguez (MEX)
21. Eloy Rojas (VEN)
22. Hector Camacho Jr. (PR)
23. Jose Areli Lopez (MEX)
24. Cesar Bazan (MEX)
25. Andreas Kotelnik (UKR)
26. Alvaro Aguilar (MEX)
27. Muhammad Abdullaev (UZB)
28. Salvatore Battaglia (ITA)
29. Shingo Eguchi (JAP)
30. Noel Cortez (MEX)

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Champ: Floyd Mayweather (USA)

1. Juan Lazcano (USA)
2. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
3. Kengo Nagashima (JAP)
4. Juan Diaz (MEX)
5. Phillip Ndou (SA)
6. Steve Johnston (USA)
7. Julio Diaz (USA)
8. Michael Clark (USA)
9. Yuri Romanov (UKR)
10. Jason Cook (GB)
11. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
12. Victoriano Sosa (DR)
13. Stefano Zoff (ITA)
14. Matt Zegan (POL)
15. Michele Delli Paoli (ITA)
16. Dennis Laurente (PHIL)
17. Prawet Singwangcha (THAI)
18. Aldo Rios (ARG)
19. Eleazar Contreras (USA)
20. Artur Grigorian (UZB)
21. Cristian Bejarano (MEX)
22. David Burke (GB)
23. Alex Trujillo (PR)
24. Graham Earl (GB)
25. Antonio Pitalua (COL)
26. Ernesto Zepeda (MEX)
27. Ricardo Silva (ARG)
28. Billy Irwin (CAN)
29. Rolando Reyes (USA)
30. Chad Brisson (CAN)

SUPER FEATHERWEIGHTS

Champ: Erik Morales (MEX)

1. Mzonke Fana (SA)
2. Randy Suico (PHIL)
3. Jesus Chavez (USA)
4. Sirimongkol Singmanassuk (THAI)
5. Zahir Raheem (USA)
6. Mike Anchondo (USA)
7. Boris Sinitsin (RUS)
8. Nobuto Honmo (JAP)
9. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
10. Janos Nagy (HUN)
11. Joel Casamayor (CUB)
12. Fernando Trejo (MEX)
13. Julio Pablo Chacon (ARG)
14. Orlando Salido (MEX)
15. Nate Campbell (USA)
16. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
17. Miguel Angel Huerta (MEX)
18. Edwin Valero (VEN)
19. Steve Luevano (USA)
20. Daniel Dominguez (MEX)
21. Goyo Vargas (MEX)
22. Michael Gomez (GB)
23. Jose Cotto (PR)
24. Craig Docherty (GB)
25. Julio Garcia (MEX)
26. Leonardo Resendiz (MEX)
27. Koba Gogaladze (GEO)
28. Alex Arthur (GB)
29. Tontcho Tontchev (BUL)
30. Bobby Pacquiao (PHIL)

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Champ: Vacant

1. Injin Chi (KOR)
2. Michael Brodie (GB)
3. Rocky Juarez (USA)
4. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
5. Humberto Soto (MEX)
6. Takashi Koshimoto (JAP)
7. Nicky Cook (GB)
8. Spend Abazi (DEN)
9. Juan Carlos Ramirez (MEX)
10. William Abelyan (USA)
11. Frankie Archuleta (USA)
12. Hector Velazquez (MEX)
13. Guty Espadas (MEX)
14. Derrick Gainer (USA)
15. Valdemir Pereira (BRA)
16. Luis Fuente (MEX)
17. Osamu Sato (JAP)
18. Jorge Solis (MEX)
19. Willie Jorrin (USA)
20. Vuyani Bungu (SA)
21. Daniel Maldonado (USA)
22. Cyril Thomas (FRA)
23. Gamaliel Diaz (MEX)
24. Manuel Calvo (SPA)
25. Osamanu Akaba (GHA)
26. Tommy Browne (AUSTRL)
27. Whyber Garcia (PAN)
28. Dainoshin Kuma (JAP)
29. Eiichi Sugama (JAP)
30. Carlos Gamez (MEX)

SUPER BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Oscar Larios (MEX)

1. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
2. Napapol Kiattisakchocchoi (THAI)
3. Yoshikane Nakajima (JAP)
4. Daniel Ponce (MEX)
5. Jimrex Jaca (PHIL)
6. Jose Rojas (VEN)
7. Shigeru Nakazato (JAP)
8. Akihiro Kanai (JAP)
9. Paulie Ayala (USA)
10. Salim Medjkoune (FRA)
11. Jorge Linares (VEN)
12. Seungsok Chae (KOR)
13. Hector Julio Avila (DR)
14. Kozo Ishii (JAP)
15. Art Simonyan (USA)
16. Manabu Fukushima (JAP)
17. Fernando Beltran Jr. (MEX)
18. Esham Pickering (GB)
19. Ruben Estanislao (MEX)
20. Adolfo Landeros (MEX)
21. Junichi Watanabe (JAP)
22. Cuauhtemoc Vargas (MEX)
23. Masakazu Sugawara (JAP)
24. Sergio Medina (ARG)
25. Andy Cabrera (MEX)
26. Sammy Ventura (MEX)
27. Michael Hunter (GB)
28. Alejandro Barrera (MEX)
29. Yuta Nagai (JAP)
30. Armando Guerrero (USA)

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Veerapol Sahaprom (THAI)

1. Diego Morales (MEX)
2. Genaro Garcia (USA)
3. Adonis Rivas (NIC)
4. Hozumi Hasegawa (JAP)
5. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
6. Jhonny Gonzalez (MEX)
7. Joichiro Tatsuyoshi (JAP)
8. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
9. Vusi Malinga (SA)
10. Jorge Lacierva (MEX)
11. David Guerault (FRA)
12. Noel Wilders (GB)
13. Gerardo Martinez (MEX)
14. Julio Cesar Avila (MEX)
15. Toshiaki Nishioka (JAP)
16. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
17. Silence Mabuza (SA)
18. Franklin Theran (COL)
19. Khulile Makeba (SA)
20. Steve Molitor (CAN)
21. Wladimir Sidorenko (UKR)
22. Saenghiran Lookbanyai (THAI)
23. Jun Toriumi (JAP)
24. Sasha Baktin (RUS)
25. Miguel Angel Munguia (MEX)
26. Akihiko Nago (JAP)
27. Francisco Mateos (MEX)
28. Eduardo Escobedo (MEX)
29. Celestino Caballero (PAN)
30. Cesar Morales (MEX)

SUPER FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Masamori Tokuyama (JAP)

1. Jose Navarro (USA)
2. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
3. Hideyasu Ishihara (JAP)
4. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)
5. Martin Castillo (MEX)
6. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
7. Reynaldo Hurtado (COL)
8. Hussein Hussein (AUSTRL)
9. Katsushige Kawashima (JAP)
10. Medgoen Singsurat (THAI)
11. Joven Jorda (PHIL)
12. Luis Bolano (COL)
13. Chatchai Sasakul (THAI)
14. Gerson Guerrero (MEX)
15. Hugo Ramirez (MEX)
16. Masaki Kawabata (JAP)
17. Ricardo Cordoba (PAN)
18. Alex Becerra (USA)
19. Waenpetch Chuwatana (THAI)
20. Ivan Hernandez (MEX)
21. Mauricio Pastrana (COL)
22. Oscar Andrade (MEX)
23. Raul Juarez (MEX)
24. Jose Beranza (MEX)
25. Cyril Bellanger (FRA)
26. Sergio Perez (MEX)
27. Karim Quibir (SPA)
28. Shin Ogata (JAP)
29. Sergio Santillan (ARG)
30. Jason Booth (GB)

FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Pongsaklek Wonjongkam (THAI)

1. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
2. Takefumi Sakata (JAP)
3. Noriyuki Komatsu (JAP)
4. Brian Viloria (USA)
5. Hiroshi Nakano (JAP)
6. Tomas Rojas (MEX)
7. Jair Jimenez (COL)
8. Eric Morel (PR)
9. Hidenobu Honda (JAP)
10. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
11. Vic Darchinyan (AUSTRL)
12. Diosdado Gabi (PHIL)
13. Evert Briceno (NIC)
14. Koji Koyama (JAP)
15. Angel Priolo (COL)
16. Daisuke Naito (JAP)
17. Masaki Nakanuma (JAP)
18. Alexander Mahmutov (RUS)
19. Carlos Bouchan (MEX)
20. Raul Eliseo Medina (ARG)
21. Damaen Kelly (GB)
22. Jose Lopez Bueno (SPA)
23. Steffen Norskov (DEN)
24. Luis Angel Martinez (MEX)
25. Julio Ler (ARG)
26. Gabriel Elizondo (USA)
27. Jose Araiza (MEX)
28. Atsushi Mando (JAP)
29. Mercurio Ciaramitaro (ITA)
30. Khunsuk Lukprabat (THAI)

LIGHT FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Jorge Arce (MEX)

1. Juanito Rubillar (PHIL)
2. Masato Hatakeyama (JAP)
3. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
4. Roberto Vazquez (PAN)
5. Manuel Vargas (MEX)
6. Melchor Cob Castro (MEX)
7. Shingo Yamaguchi (JAP)
8. Tatsuo Hayashida (JAP)
9. Ulises Solis (MEX)
10. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
11. Yosam Choi (KOR)
12. Marvin Tampos (PHIL)
13. Sarikalek O. Eakarin (THAI)
14. Nerys Espinoza (NIC)
15. Edgar Sosa (MEX)
16. Omar Nino (MEX)
17. Rafael Lozano (SPA)
18. Monelisi Myekeni (SA)
19. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
20. Andrea Sarritzu (ITA)
21. Hugo Cazares (MEX)
22. Carlos Fajardo (NIC)
23. Javier Lagos (MEX)
24. Juan Centeno (NIC)
25. Bert Batawang (PHIL)
26. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
27. Ernesto Castro (NIC)
28. Jose Lopez (PR)
29. Nobuaki Masuda (JAP)
30. Munetsugu Kayo (JAP)

STRAWWEIGHTS

Champ: Eagle Akakura (JAP)

1. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
2. Jose Antonio Aguirre (MEX)
3. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
4. Heriberto Gijon (PHIL)
5. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
6. Satoshi Kogumasaka (JAP)
7. Mohamed Rachman (INDO)
8. Juan Palacios (NIC)
9. Sithembele Kibiti (SA)
10. Oledong Sithsanerchai (THAI)
11. Armand de la Cruz (PHIL)
12. Genki Ohnaka (JAP)
13. Omar Soto (MEX)
14. Lorenzo Trejo (MEX)
15. Hiroshi Matsumoto (JAP)
16. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
17. Pornsawan Porpramook (THAI)
18. Teruo Misawa (JAP)
19. Francisco Rosas (MEX)
20. Miguel Telliz (NIC)
21. Sizwe Sinyabi (SA)
22. Namchai Ratanachaigym (THAI)
23. Ricardo San Martin (MEX)
24. Gerardo Verde (MEX)
25. Iwan Key (INDO)
26. Makoto Suzuki (JAP)
27. Nkosinathi Joyi (SA)
28. Shunsuke Nagao (JAP)
29. Valentin Leon (MEX)
30. Emilio Aguelican (MEX)

IBF RATINGS

(Ratings as of April 2004)

HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: Chris Byrd (USA)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Jameel McCline (USA)
4. James Toney (USA)
5. Juan Carlos Gomez (USA)
6. Hasim Rahman (USA)
7. Andrew Golota (USA)
8. Joe Mesi (USA)
9. Lance Whitaker (USA)
10. Vassiliy Jirov (USA)
11. David Tua (NZ)
12. Henry Akinwande (GB)

CRUISERWEIGHTS

Champ: Vacant

1. Kelvin Davis (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Ezra Sellers (USA)
4. O'Neil Bell (USA)
5. Vincenzo Cantatore (ITA)
6. Luis Pineda (PAN)
7. Ravea Springs (USA)
8. Guillermo Jones (PAN)
9. Dale Brown (CAN)
10. Carl Thompson (GB)
11. Alexander Gurov (UKR)
12. Vadim Tokarev (RUS)

LT. HEAVYWEIGHTS

Champ: Glencoffe Johnson (USA)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Montell Griffin (USA)
4. Thomas Ulrich (GER)
5. Clinton Woods (GB)
6. Richard Hall (USA)
7. Julio Gonzalez (USA)
8. Paul Briggs (AUSTRL)
9. Rico Hoye (USA)
10. Dariusz Michalczewski (POL)
11. Stipe Drews (CRO)
12. Tomasz Adamek (POL)

SUPER MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Vacant

1. Syd Vanderpool (CAN)
2. Vacant
3. Mads Larsen (DEN)
4. Danilo Haussler (GER)
5. Jeff Lacy (USA)
6. Mikkel Kessler (DEN)
7. Charles Brewer (USA)
8. Mario Veit (GER)
9. Tito Mendoza (PAN)
10. Robin Reid (GB)
11. Vitaly Tsypko (UKR)
12. Kabary Salem (USA)

MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Bernard Hopkins (USA)

1. Robert Allen (USA)
2. Raymond Joval (HOL)
3. Jermain Taylor (USA)
4. Sam Soliman (AUSTRL)
5. Bert Schenk (GER)
6. Howard Eastman (GB)
7. Kuvanych Toygonbayev (UZB)
8. Derrell Coley (USA)
9. Bea Diallo (LIB)
10. Hector Velazco (ARG)
11. Angel Hernandez (USA)
12. Kelly Pavlik (USA)

JR. MIDDLEWEIGHTS

Champ: Vacant

1. Kassim Ouma (USA)
2. Verno Phillips (USA)
3. Roman Karmazin (RUS)
4. Vernon Forrest (USA)
5. Shannan Taylor (AUSTRL)
6. J.C. Candelo (USA)
7. Ricardo Mayorga (NIC)
8. Julio Garcia (USA)
9. Fernando Vargas (USA)
10. Tokundo Olajide (USA)
11. Keith Holmes (USA)
12. Alejandro Garcia (MEX)

WELTERWEIGHTS

Champ: Cory Spinks (USA)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Teddy Reid (USA)
4. Rafael Pineda (COL)
5. Cosme Rivera (MEX)
6. Kermit Cintron (USA)
7. Thomas Damgaard (DEN)
8. Jose Celaya (USA)
9. Ishe Smith (USA)
10. James Hare (ENG)
11. Christian Bladt (DEN)
12. Hercules Kyvelos (CAN)

JR. WELTERWEIGHTS

Champ: Kostya Tszyu (AUSTRL)
Interim Champ: Sharmba Mitchell (USA)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Ricky Hatton (ENG)
4. Lovemore Ndou (AUSTRL)
5. Miguel Cotto (USA)
6. Mike Stewart (USA)
7. James Leija (USA)
8. Diobelys Hurtado (USA)
9. DeMarcus Corley (USA)
10. Paul Spadafora (USA)
11. Omar Weis (ARG)
12. Juan Valenzuela (MEX)

LIGHTWEIGHTS

Champ: Javier Jauregui (MEX)

1. Julio Diaz (USA)
2. Vacant
3. Levander Johnson (USA)
4. Michael Clark (USA)
5. Courtney Burton (USA)
6. Artur Grigorian (UZB)
7. Juan Gomez Trinidad (PR)
8. Julien Lorcy (FRA)
9. Jose Luis Castillo (MEX)
10. Steve Johnston (USA)
11. Steve Quinones (USA)
12. Craig Weber (USA)

JR. LIGHTWEIGHTS

Champ: Carlos Hernandez (USA)

1. Robbie Peden (AUSTRL)
2. Vacant
3. Steve Forbes
4. Jorge Barrios (ARG)
5. Joel Casamayor (USA)
6. Sirimongkol Singmanassak (THAI)
7. Nate Campbell (USA)
8. David Santos (USA)
9. Phillip Ndou (SA)
10. Janos Nagy (HUN)
11. Mike Anchondo (USA)
12. Michael Gomez (IRE)

FEATHERWEIGHTS

Champ: Juan Manuel Marquez (MEX)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Manny Pacquiao (PHIL)
4. Orlando Salido (MEX)
5. Marco Antonio Barrera (MEX)
6. Zahir Raheem (USA)
7. Rocky Juarez (USA)
8. Fahprakorb Rakkiatgym (THAI)
9. Derrick Gainer (USA)
10. Spend Abazi (DEN)
11. Emmanuel Lucero (USA)
12. Humberto Soto (MEX)

JR. FEATHERWEIGHTS

Champ: Israel Vazquez (MEX)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Paulie Ayala (USA)
4. Jose Luis Valbuena (ARG)
5. Art Simonyan (USA)
6. David Donis (USA)
7. Nadel Hussein (AUSTRL)
8. Fahsung 3K Battery (THAI)
9. Agapito Sanchez (DR)
10. Alejandro Barrera (MEX)
11. Diego Morales (MEX)
12. Bobby Boy Velardez (USA)

BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Rafael Marquez (MEX)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Ricardo Vargas (MEX)
4. Genaro Garcia (MEX)
5. Pete Frissina (USA)
6. David Guerault (FRA)
7. Jorge Lacierva (USA)
8. Heriberto Ruiz (MEX)
9. Mauricio Martinez (PAN)
10. Mauricio Pastrana (PAN)
11. Daniel Ponce DeLeon (MEX)
12. Diego Morales (MEX)

JR. BANTAMWEIGHTS

Champ: Luis Perez (NIC)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Martin Castillo (MEX)
4. Jose Navarro (USA)
5. Luis Bolano (COL)
6. Felix Machado (VEN)
7. Eric Morel (USA)
8. Jason Booth (ENG)
9. Fernando Montiel (MEX)
10. Malcolm Tunacao (PHIL)
11. Peter Culshaw (ENG)
12. Dimitri Kirilov (RUS)

FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Irene Pacheco (COL)

1. Vic Darchinian (AUSTRL)
2. Vacant
3. Jair Jimenez (COL)
4. Damaen Kelly (GB)
5. Hussein Hussein (LEB)
6. Luis Maldonado (MEX)
7. Brahim Asloum (FRA)
8. Angel Priolo (COL)
9. Alejandro Montiel (MEX)
10. Mzukisi Sikali (SA)
11. Hawk Makepula (SA)
12. Diosado Gabi (PHIL)

JR. FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Jose Burgos (MEX)

1. Vacant
2. Vacant
3. Fahlan Sakreerin (THAI)
4. Eric Ortiz (MEX)
5. Wendyl Janiola (PHIL)
6. Jesus Martinez (MEX)
7. Yosam Choi (KOR)
8. Tatsuo Hatashida (JAP)
9. Alexander Sanchez (PR)
10. Roberto Vasquez (PAN)
11. Jaewon Kim (KOR)
12. Mhikiza Myekeni (SA)

MINI FLYWEIGHTS

Champ: Daniel Reyes (COL)

1. Muhammad Rachman (INDO)
2. Vacant
3. Pichit Siriwat (THAI)
4. Isaac Bustos (MEX)
5. Noel Tunacao (PHIL)
6. Roberto Leyva (MEX)
7. Ernesto Rubillar (PHIL)
8. Jose Lopez (PR)
9. Rodel Mayol (PHIL)
10. Eriberto Gejon (PHIL)
11. Omar Soto (MEX)
12. Juan Palacios (NIC)

CLASSIC

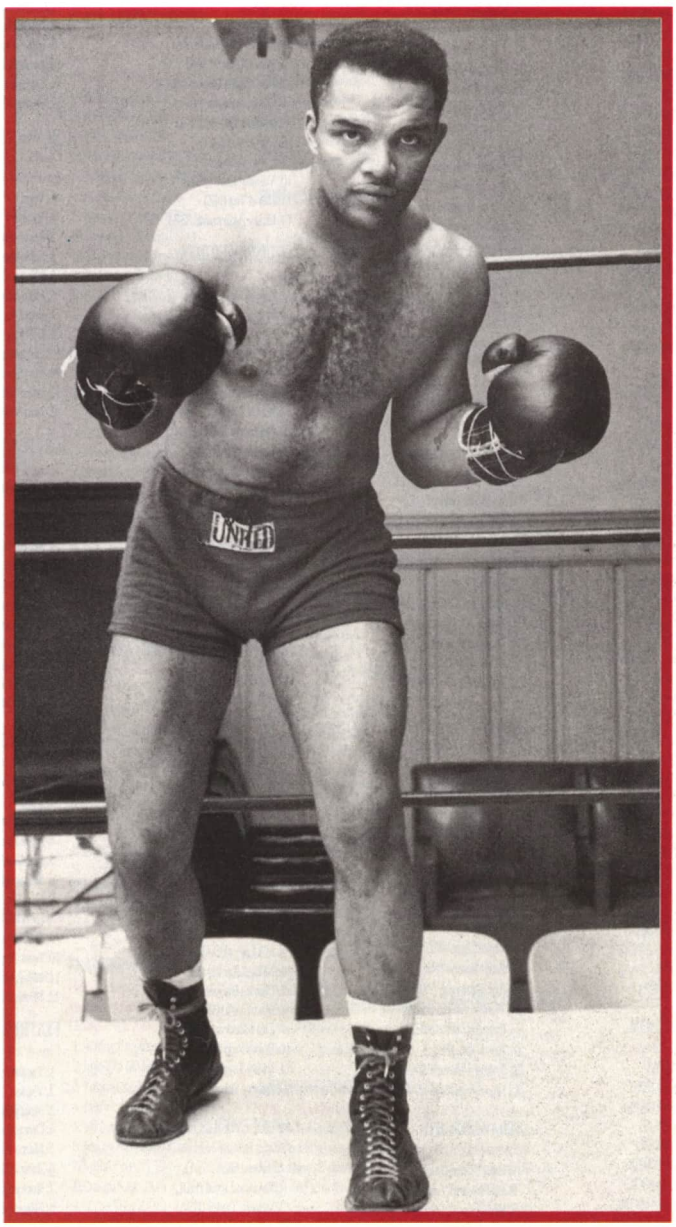
From THE RING, May 1962

SOMEBODY UP THERE DOESN'T LIKE ME

By Eddie Machen

(Editor's Note: This is a condensed version.)

When I was going to Shasta Junior High School in Redding, California, my old hometown, I played all sports. And I listened to all my coaches. They talked to me father-to-son: "Eddie, if you try—and keep trying—you'll get to the top. Never quit and you'll never be disappointed."



That's at least 15 years ago. I was 14 or so then, I'll be 30 this July 15. To the best of my ability, I've lived up to my old teachers' advice all this time.

But, in my "old age," I'm beginning to wonder. After seven years as a professional fighter, not bad years on the record, I'm not where I aimed to be. Far from it, I've had so much heartache and dashed hopes that I sincerely wonder if my teachers were right.

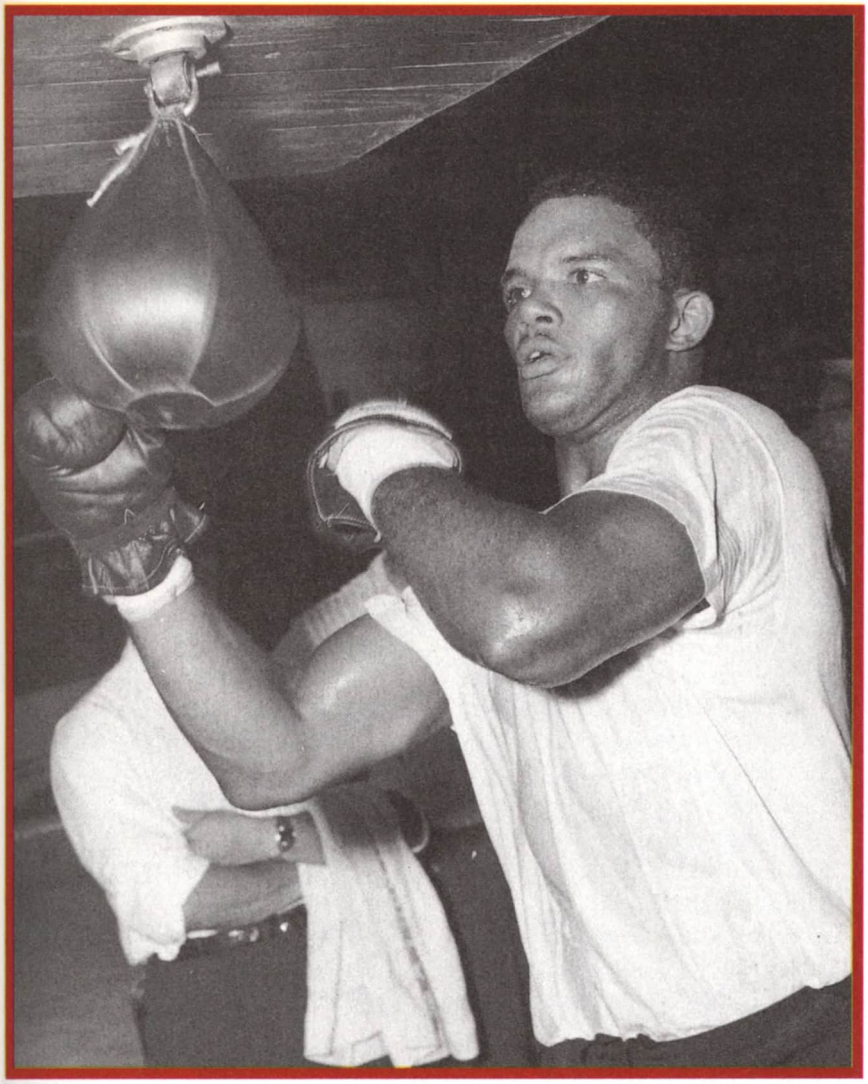
You know, I read that book Rocky Graziano wrote about his life ... how, after all the trouble he was in, as a kid, in the Army, and with boxing commissioners, everything worked out, how he got to be middleweight champion, later on a big TV and movie name, etc.

He called his book *Somebody Up There Likes Me.* I ought to write one: *Somebody Up There Doesn't Like Me.*

I'm the number-two heavyweight contender. I've been number one before. But I haven't got a crack at Floyd Patterson and the heavyweight championship and I don't know when I will.

I said I started with a lot of ambition. Like Graziano, I had a few things to overcome—and I did. When I was a teenager, I was rough, plenty rough. Around the upper Sacramento Valley, all the cops knew me. One day I heard one of them talking about me: "That Machen kid, he's the toughest alley fighter of them all. When there's trouble we look for him."

They found me. They didn't give me pep talks like my coaches. I straightened myself out after a while. I played varsity football for Shasta High, went to Yuba



Although he never stopped training hard, veteran heavyweight contender Eddie Machen was growing frustrated at not getting a title shot at Floyd Patterson. He joked that if he wrote a book, the title should have been **Somebody Up There Doesn't Like Me.**

Junior College. I was a fullback and I imagined I could become a big college star and maybe get into the pros.

But the roof fell in on me when the coach who brought me to Yuba lost his job—and I lost my scholarship. That washed me up on football. I was big enough for heavyweight boxing, and I had an uncle, Dave Mills, who'd been a pro heavyweight. Dave fought Luis Angel Firpo and Jack Johnson.

Uncle Dave was my first trainer. You know family; it's easy to disagree with them. So I left him and hooked up with a fellow named Christie Louis. He trained me for the amateurs. I had three fights, two knockout wins and a draw. But this wasn't getting me anywhere and I quit.

Early in 1955, I got the boxing bug again. A Redding man, Lee Hughes, encouraged me. He admitted he didn't know much about the fight game. He suggested we find somebody "who knew it from the inside."

At the time, Sid Flaherty was the best-known manager on the West Coast. He had more fighters than anybody else and he had the middleweight champion, Bobo Olson.

We went to see Mr. Flaherty in San Francisco. As I've discovered many times since, he doesn't get very enthusiastic about anybody. He listened to our story and asked me to box in the gym for him. Afterward he said nothing. I got the feeling he wasn't going to take me. I had read in the papers where he'd said "heavyweights are a lot of trouble and you can't fight them too often."

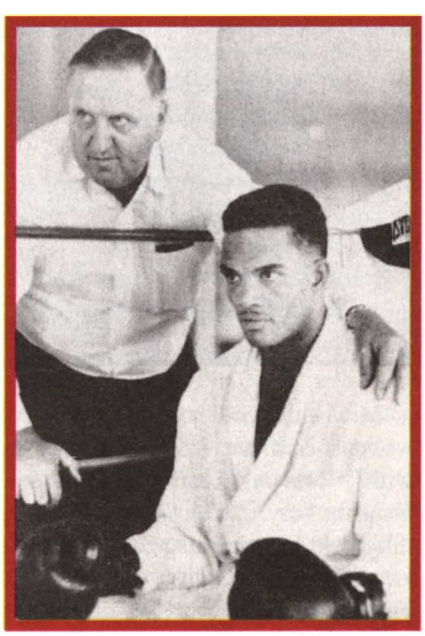
But he must have liked something about me. He got in touch with Lee in Redding. I came back and went into training under him. You'd have to grant I got off to a sensational start. I knocked out my first 10 opponents, six in the first round.

For my 12th fight, and my first on TV, Sid—by this time we were on a first-name basis—matched me with Julio Mederos, a big Cuban. He had a reputation; he'd knocked out Roland LaStarza. I took no chances on getting nailed. I boxed him, easy does it.

For my next fight I got another Cuban, even bigger than Mederos: Nino Valdes. He'd been built up even more too. But I didn't scare. I moved on him, left jab, right cross. He was punching back and it was a good fight. Still, I didn't think there was any doubt about the decision, which went to me. What an uproar there was, though! Bobby Gleason, his manager, told everybody Valdes had been robbed.

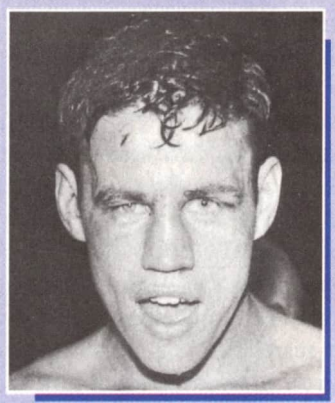
One week later, I remember, there was an announcement that Rocky Marciano was retiring as heavyweight champion. It sounded like a wonderful break for all concerned, including me ... the fellows who now make the best showing will get the chance to fight for the vacant title, I thought.

Then the word came out of the East: Archie Moore was in and Floyd Patterson would be his opponent if Patterson could get by Hurricane Jackson. Patterson beat Jackson, but only by a split decision.



As his career was just getting started, Machen convinced Sid Flaherty, one the best-known managers on the West Coast, to work with him.

THE RING RATINGS, May 1962



Terry Downes

HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Floyd Patterson, Scarsdale, NY
1. **Sonny Liston,** Philadelphia, PA
2. **Eddie Machen,** Portland, OR
3. **Zora Folley,** Chandler, AZ
4. **Robert Cleroux,** Canada
5. **Ingemar Johansson,** Sweden
6. **Alejandro Lavorante,** Argentina
7. **Henry Cooper,** England
8. **Cleveland Williams,** Houston, TX
9. **Cassius Clay,** Louisville, KY
10. **Dick Richardson,** Wales

LIGHT HEAVYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Archie Moore, San Diego, CA
1. **Harold Johnson,** Philadelphia, PA
2. **Giulio Rinaldi,** Italy
3. **Doug Jones,** New York, NY
4. **Eddie Cotton,** Seattle, WA
5. **Chic Calderwood,** Scotland
6. **Erich Schoppner,** Germany
7. **Mauro Mina,** Peru
8. **Gustav Scholz,** Germany
9. **Von Clay,** Philadelphia, PA
10. **Bobo Olson,** Portland, OR

MIDDLEWEIGHTS
World Champ: Terry Downes, England
1. **Gene Fullmer,** West Jordan, UT
2. **Dick Tiger,** Nigeria
3. **Paul Pender,** Brookline, MA
4. **Joey Giardello,** Philadelphia, PA
5. **Henry Hank,** Detroit, MI
6. **Denny Moyer,** Portland, OR
7. **Florentino Fernandez,** Cuba
8. **Ray Robinson,** New York, NY
9. **Jesse Smith,** Philadelphia, PA
10. **Yama Bahama,** Bimini

WELTERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Benny Paret, Cuba
1. **Emile Griffith,** New York, NY
2. **Ralph Dupas,** New Orleans, LA
3. **Luis Rodriguez,** Cuba
4. **Jorge Fernandez,** Argentina
5. **Duilio Loi,** Italy
6. **Brian Curvis,** Wales
7. **Luis Folledo,** Spain
8. **Ted Wright,** Detroit, MI
9. **Curtis Cokes,** Dallas, TX
10. **Federico Thompson,** Argentina

LIGHTWEIGHTS
World Champ: Joe Brown, Baton Rouge, LA
1. **Carlos Ortiz,** New York, NY
2. **Dave Charnley,** England
3. **Flash Elorde,** Philippines
4. **Doug Vaillant,** Cuba
5. **Carlos Hernandez,** Venezuela
6. **Eddie Perkins,** Chicago, IL
7. **Paolo Rosi,** New York, NY
8. **Louis Molina,** San Jose, CA
9. **Bert Somodio,** Philippines
10. **Kenny Lane,** Muskegon, MI

FEATHERWEIGHTS
World Champ: Davey Moore, Springfield, MO
1. **Rafiu King,** Nigeria
2. **Sugar Ramos,** Cuba
3. **Howard Winstone,** Wales
4. **Kazuo Takayama,** Japan
5. **Sergio Caprari,** Italy
6. **Gracieux Lamperti,** France
7. **Danny Valdez,** Los Angeles, CA
8. **Lalo Guerrero,** Mexico
9. **Jet Bally,** Philippines
10. **Herman Duncan,** Los Angeles, CA

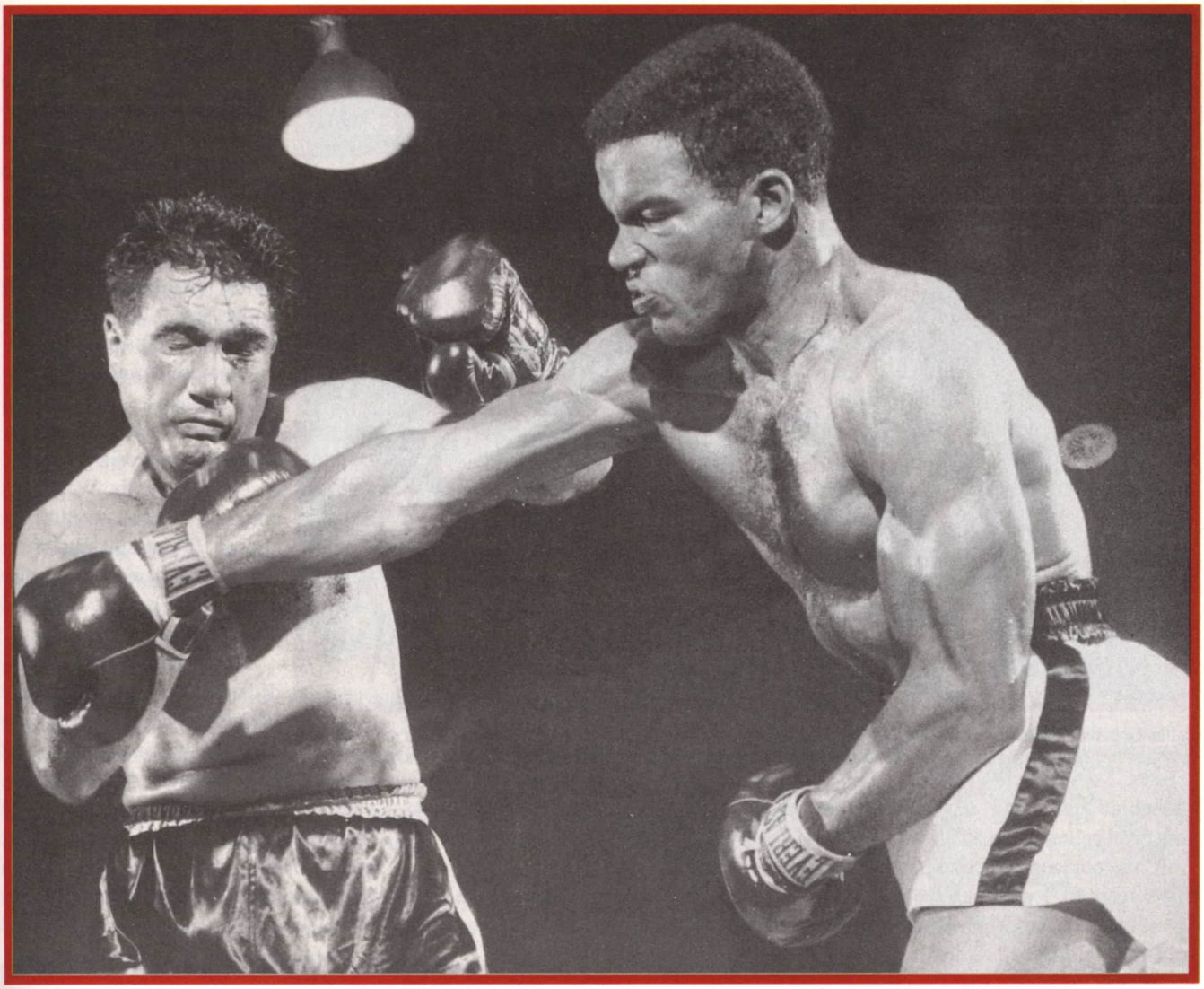
BANTAMWEIGHTS
World Champ: Eder Jofre, Brazil
1. **Joe Medel,** Mexico
2. **Johnny Caldwell,** Ireland
3. **Pierre Cossemyns,** Belgium
4. **Alphonse Halimi,** France
5. **Piero Rollo,** Italy
6. **Ismael Laguna,** Panama
7. **Freddie Gilroy,** Ireland
8. **Herman Marques,** Stockton, CA
9. **Leo Espinosa,** Philippines
10. **Carlos Hernandez,** Mexico

FLYWEIGHTS
World Champ: Pone Kingpetch, Thailand
1. **Ramon Arias,** Venezuela
2. **Mimun Ben Ali,** Spain
3. **Sadao Yaoita,** Japan
4. **Salvatore Burruni,** Italy
5. **Chatchai Lamphafa,** Thailand
6. **Pascual Perez,** Argentina
7. **Kyo Noguchi,** Japan
8. **Chucho Hernandez,** Mexico
9. **Jean Guerard,** France
10. **Horacio Accavallo,** Argentina

Meanwhile, Sid, hoping against hope we could crash the picture, rematched me with Valdes in Miami Beach, Valdes' home territory, and on TV. Valdes knew this could be something for him and he started hot. I caught a couple of his pineapples on the chin. He wasn't fooling. I decided I couldn't take a gamble on a decision. I looked for a spot to take him out. In the eighth round I saw it. I propped him up with the left and slammed in the hardest right I could throw. He sat down and the fight was over.

Here I was, with a clear knockout over a real contender. But I was on the outside looking in. Moore and Patterson soon were definitely matched. Moore, I could understand. He was old, but he was a name. Patterson was the puzzler. He had fought only Jackson, of the name heavyweights, and he had been beaten by Joey Maxim, a light heavyweight. And Maxim always had been duck soup for Moore.

In my mind, I made Archie a good thing over Patterson. When they fought, I guess I was the most surprised guy in the world. I never could imagine Moore, who'd fought Marciano until he dropped,



One of Machen's first big victories came against former light heavyweight champ and future Hall of Famer Joey Maxim. Machen defeated Maxim twice in 1957, both times by decision, and had a record of 24-0-1 entering 1958.

folding up so fast against Floyd.

Sid took it calm as ever. "Fine," he said. "A young champion probably will be more willing to give you a crack at the title than an old guy. Let's just keep campaigning."

Before the end of the year 1956, I had licked four more guys, the last two on TV, John Holman, whom I stopped, and Johnny Summerlin.

Sid put out feelers to see if he could get Maxim ... "beat Maxim and we have a reason for hollering for Patterson." The windup was I fought Maxim twice within four months, licked him twice.

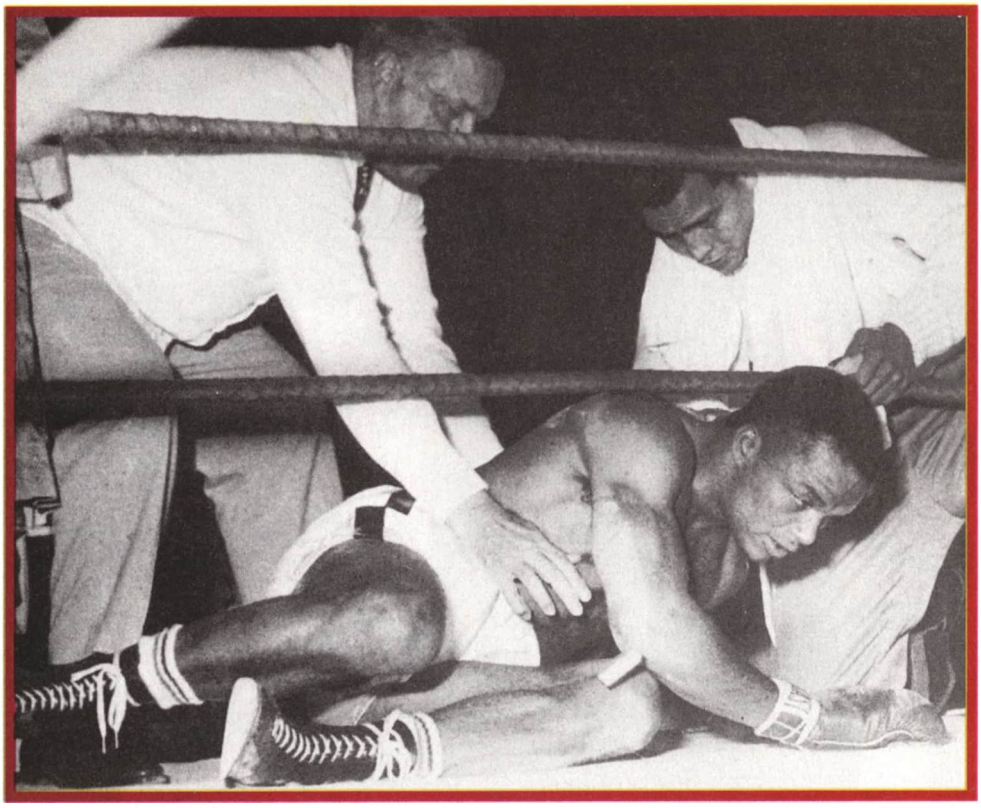
As I look back, that was probably a mistake. Patterson hadn't come close to having Maxim off his feet. Anyway, he chose Jackson as his first challenger. And, that summer of 1957, when he got through with poor Hurricane, he picked on a rank amateur, Pete Rademacher, who hadn't even had one pro fight. The ratings all kept me as number-one contender, yet where was it getting me?

Things didn't improve after the Rademacher thing. I fought Jackson, knocked him out in the same round as Patterson did, the 10th. I just didn't have the gall to fight Rademacher. And every time my name was mentioned to Floyd and Cus D'Amato, his manager, they had some flim-flam excuse ... some reason, any reason, not to consider me.

In the spring of 1958, Sid and I were getting desperate. We figured we only could force recognition by fighting and licking the toughest guy around. At the time this was Zora Folley, a rangy boxer-puncher from Arizona. We realized it was a risk. We were two of a kind, it could prove a bad fight. And it was on national TV. As it happened, the styles were too similar. The fight dragged through 12 rounds and was a draw. D'Amato took advantage of the situation to say: "This eliminates both." In his heart he probably knew his man couldn't lick either of us.

Now Sid and I really didn't know which way to turn. I had a 24-0-1 record and I hadn't missed one tough opponent in the whole U.S. Over in Europe, though, there was one glamour fighter I hadn't fought, a Swede by the name of Ingemar Johansson. He was unbeaten and had knocked out 12 of 20 opponents. We went to Sweden.

When I got into the ring that night of September 14, 1958, in Goteborg, I had a feeling I was a wanderer going nowhere, except fight-to-fight. There was an enormous crowd there, 55,000, and they were



Against Ingemar Johansson in '58, Machen went blank as soon as the Swede landed a right flush on his chin. Machen later had to be told that he'd been knocked down three times before he was counted out at 2:16 of the first round.

all behind Johansson, cheering like an American college football crowd.

It was outdoors, of course, and colder than I realized. I went into the ring without being properly warmed up, too. But once the fight started, I didn't figure he was too much. I was getting in my jab nicely. He seemed scared. When I even cocked my right, he jumped six feet.

Then it happened. He drilled me flush on the chin with a right and I went blank. Obviously, it was one helluva punch. Later they told me I was down three times before I was counted out at 2:16 of the round. I will repeat what I said then: "If you let him get off first, he'll flatten anybody." Sid told the newspapermen there: "If he starts the same as he did tonight, he'll knock out Floyd Patterson."

You see, he had been signed with Patterson before the fight.

There's the breaks. One fight and he was in there with the champ. I had been in the top circle almost as long as Patterson himself and I had beaten better men than him, half a dozen of them, but I hadn't been able to get close. All I could be, evidently, was a steppingstone for somebody else.

We'd had our return contract to fight Johansson again. You know how valuable a piece of paper is. We took it into Federal Court in New York a few weeks before Patterson was to fight Johansson there. At 2 o'clock one day, Judge Irving Kaufman gave his verdict: "... the contract may be valid but ..." Who cares about the rest? He was giving them the duke. At 2:30 in the New York Commission offices, Johansson and Patterson were officially and formally signed.

I couldn't have been any deader if I were six feet under. I went home to the West Coast convinced that I would have chased Johansson out of the ring ... if I were to get another crack at him ... but knowing I never would.

His knockout of Patterson did not surprise me or Sid Flaherty. But this only made matters worse. There would have to be a return after a year's waiting. You'll recall I'd said Johansson wasn't hard to beat if you get off the mark faster than he does. And, in the return, that's exactly what Patterson did. He chewed Ingo up in the fifth round

Machen was a late substitute for NBA light heavyweight titlist Harold Johnson when he faced Doug Jones. Machen's 10-round unanimous decision over the previously undefeated Jones re-installed Machen among the top heavyweight contenders, yearning for the chance to fight heavyweight champ Floyd Patterson.

and made history, becoming first man ever to regain the heavyweight title from the man he'd lost it to.

I'll admit I made boo-boos. I'd fought Folley again, early in 1960. It didn't figure to be any better as a spectacle or for me as a prestige fight. I needed action and he was the one to fight, according to the promoters. It was no better to watch. It was worse—and they gave Folley the decision.

The TV people offered good money for me to box Sonny Liston, coming up strong as a contender. Sid accepted and the fight was set for Seattle on September 7, 1960, 12 rounds. About a week before that date, I strained ligaments in my right arm.

One minute after the fight started I had a numbing ache in my right side. I knew I would have to fight Liston with one hand or quit. I wasn't going to do that, for obvious reasons.

The result was that I dipped, dodged, and ducked for 12 rounds. I didn't do much to him. I didn't expect to with one good hand. But, what's more important, he didn't do anything to me—and he had two good hands.

I wasn't shocked at the unanimous scoring for Liston. I didn't think I had a chance with that bad hand. I was surprised that a puncher with his buildup didn't catch on and bomb me with lefts to the right side of my head. All things considered, I thought I got away pretty well.

Rest brought me around. In the early-summer, the TV crowd wanted a name heavyweight opponent for Harold Johnson, the NBA light heavyweight titlist, in Atlantic City. I realized there was no point in my boxing a light heavyweight, and a good one. But, as I've told you, I need to keep working for a) the money and b) conditioning value. And Johnson signed a contract for a return in the event he won.

You likely know that in New Jersey there's only one official, the referee, in this case Paul Cavalier, whom they call "5-4-1 Cavalier." It was a tough fight and a fast fight. And Cavalier called it 5-4-1, but for Johnson.

Well, we had the return scheduled—or, at least, I thought we did.

These last several months I've been mixed up in nothing but postponements. The first wasn't bad for me. Johnson pulled out of an NBA title defense against Doug Jones. Jones didn't want to blow the date and I had been in training, so I fought him. I've never had a softer night. I outboxed him, I outpunched him.

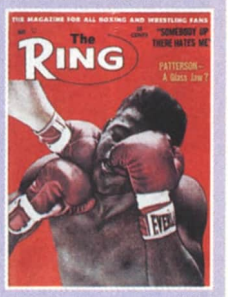
As matters stand, I'm a fighter with a 40-4-1 record. I'm qualified to fight for the championship. If you want my modest opinion, I'm capable of winning it. But, jumping Jehosophat, when, oh, when, oh, when, will I get the opportunity? I'm not exactly gray, but I will be if this keeps up. I just haven't got any luck, it seems.

Or maybe, I was right when I said somebody up there doesn't like me.

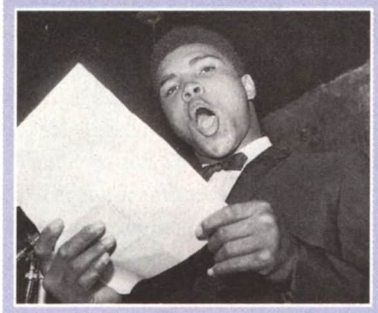
***

ADDENDUM: After beating Jones, Machen went 7-0-1 (6) in his next eight fights, and then he finally got his chance at Patterson. By then, however, Patterson was no longer the champ. When the 12-rounder came off in July '64, Patterson won it on points, kicking off a stretch in which Machen lost seven of 11 fights before ending his career in '67 with a 50-11-3 (29) record. He died from a tragic fall in August 1972. ■

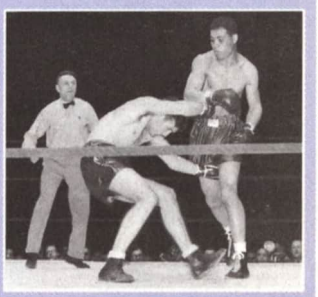
THE RING, May 1962



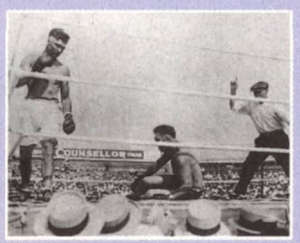
***The Cover*:** Dan Florio, trainer of heavyweight champ Floyd Patterson, denied that his fighter had a glass chin. Instead, Florio rationalized that Patterson's tendency to get knocked down was a result of Patterson's aggressive style. Florio also said Patterson's bad habit of leaping off the canvas at his opponent often left the champ off-balance to get clipped. Besides, Florio pointed out, Patterson always got up.



***Clay Opens Up*:** Before he became Muhammad Ali, he was known as Cassius Marcellus Clay, a 20-year-old kid with a big mouth and a strong belief in himself. Clay at the time asked and accurately answered a rhetorical question: "What's wrong with boxing? Nothing I can't correct."



***The Round 13 Jinx*:** The number 13 is viewed by many as a jinx. THE RING looked back at the hex of the 13th round. Many famous fights ended in the 13th. The most celebrated 13th-round demise was Billy Conn's against Joe Louis. Conn, an 18-to-5 underdog giving away 25 pounds, outboxed Louis and seemed on his way to winning the heavyweight title. But Conn tried for a knockout, and was instead knocked out by Louis in unlucky 13.



***Dempsey Denies Rumor*:** In his autobiography titled *Dempsey*, former heavyweight champ Jack Dempsey denied that his hand wraps were doctored when he won the heavyweight title with a brutal three-round knockout of towering Jess Willard. "I didn't need plaster, and it never occurred to me that I might," Dempsey wrote.

***Fighter Of The Month*:** Finding it increasingly tough to make the 126-pound limit and the featherweight class desolate of attractive opponents or possible TV dates, featherweight champ Davey Moore decided to test the waters at lightweight. In his first foray as a 135-pounder, Moore stopped Cisco Andrade in seven rounds.

THE FIGHT DOCTOR

CUTTING YOUR LOSSES

By Margaret Goodman, MD

It is rare to have a fight card without at least one bout being stopped because of a cut. This column is dedicated to helping fans, trainers, and the fighter better understand the process.

There are three basic reasons why a fight must be stopped due to a cut:

1) The cut fighter would be at an unfair disadvantage if the fight continued.

2) Allowing the fight to continue could result in irreparable damage to the injured boxer.

3) The cut fighter is also losing most of the rounds and taking too much punishment.

Unless a cut is severe at the onset, it is reasonable to allow the cutman a round or two to work on it. If the laceration occurs in the last round or two of a championship bout, as long as the fighter isn't taking too much punishment, you want to give him every opportunity to finish. On the other hand, if a young fighter in a four-rounder suffers a huge gash, the fight should be stopped immediately.

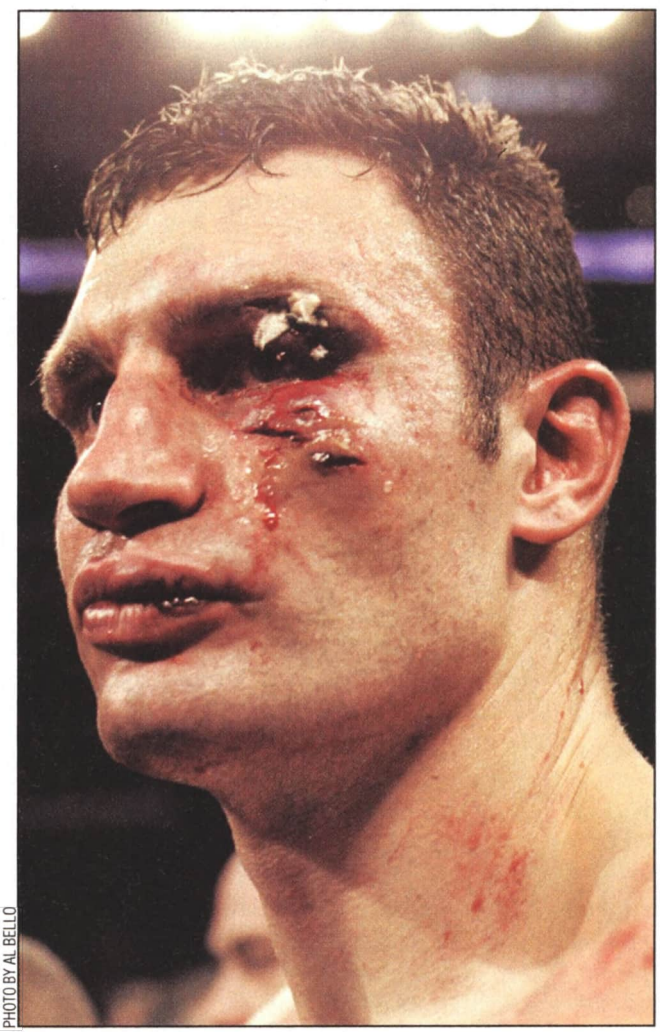


PHOTO BY AL BELLO

Vitali Klitschko suffered severe fight-ending eye cuts in his fight with Lennox Lewis. He may have suffered permanent damage if the fight had been permitted to continue beyond the sixth round.

Cuts can occur in many different places. The following is a list of bleeding sites of the greatest concern:

1) All cuts near the eye. If inside the bony orbit, cuts can affect the eye muscles or nerves, resulting in a ptosis (lid droop), limit movement of the eyeball causing double vision, or affect the tear duct.

2) A "pumper" or arterial bleeder. These are difficult to stop during a fight.

3) Cuts on the Vermillion border of the lip (area of increased pigment around the mouth). These are tough to repair and can result in severe scarring and cosmetic difficulties.

4) Cuts inside the ear. These are difficult to evaluate ringside and could indicate a skull fracture.

5) Cuts inside the mouth, as swallowing or inhaling blood can cause vomiting or choking.

6) Cuts on the edge of the eyelid (near the lashes) or the upper or lower eyelid itself. These are very rare, but could require immediate surgery, and if the fight continued, could result in blindness.

On the other hand, cuts on the forehead (if not too close to the brow), cuts on the scalp (usually from butts), cuts across the nose (unless the nose is broken), and cuts on the cheek (unless through and through), may bleed for a while, but can be controlled and are not dangerous.

The keys to stopping all bleeding are pressure, time, and cold. The cornerman must begin treatment immediately at the beginning of the one-minute rest period. The doctor should take a quick look, and the trainer should continue instructions from the ring apron, but the cutman needs room to work. Cold is a natural vasoconstrictor. It makes the vessels constrict and decreases blood flow into the field of the cut. An ice cold Enswell (a flat piece of metal) applied with direct, firm pressure to a laceration can work wonders. Vaseline makes the skin slippery and reduces tearing of the skin.

There are three legal medications that can be used separately or incorporated into the Vaseline to stop bleeding:

1) Adrenaline (epinephrine 1/1000 concentration) will be absorbed into the skin and decrease blood flow.

2) Avetine, once in contact with a bleeding surface, will cause platelets to stick and form a clot.

3) Thrombin is an agent for dry (not actively bleeding) cuts.

Al Gavin, one of boxing's best cutmen, stresses the use of pressure and fresh substances.

"I start with Adrenaline and apply it directly into the wound with a Q-tip," said Gavin. "If the bleeding isn't slowed, I apply Avetine. I don't mix these with Vaseline, as it dilutes their strength. The Vaseline is placed on top to help keep the medicine in place."

Typical mistakes I see cutmen make include placing gobs of Vaseline on the face (it always finds its way into the boxer's eyes); using an Enswell incorrectly (the end result is increased facial swelling, not less), and disorganized ringside preparation (cornermen arguing who will enter the ring, who will carry the stool, and which substances to use).

How can cuts be prevented? In the gym, a fighter should always wear good fitting headgear. But according to Former Nevada State Athletic Commission ring physician Dr. Flip Homansky, some fighters are just bleeders.

"Vito Antuofermo tried everything—pickle brine, multiple facial surgeries to remove scar tissue, and even went so far as to have his orbital bone shaved smooth," recalled Dr. Homansky. "But nothing worked."

Dr. Homansky also suggests minimizing drugs that make bleeding more likely (aspirin, Motrin, Aleve), steroids that will make the skin thinner, alcohol as it increases bleeding time, and cigarette smoke, which slows healing time.

Homansky remembers the now illegal Monsel's solution.

"It is a lead-based substance that works by destroying surrounding tissue thereby creating a black ring of dead flesh around the cut," said Dr. Homansky.

A cutman should know his fighter. You don't have to wait to see blood before treating an area of concern. It's also important to understand the anatomy of the face, including the difference between veins and arteries. Of course, a good cutman can be the difference between winning and losing. After all, if he can't control the bleeding from a cut below the brow, the fighter's vision is impaired and his chances of winning greatly impaired.

The same applies to a nosebleed. If the boxer can't breathe, he loses energy. For example, Manny Pacquiao's sixth-round TKO of Lehlo Ledwaba in June 2001 was set up by a corner having no idea how to handle a terrible nosebleed.

It's also vital that a fighter obey suspensions, as they are given for a reason. If a cut isn't given enough time to heal, it will reopen. According to Dr. Biff McCann, chief of plastic surgery at Valley Hospital in Las Vegas, "A cut should be sutured as quickly as possible, but definitely within 24 hours."

In some cases, waiting more than six hours can make wound closure difficult.

"Although a laceration will never be 100 percent, it should reach maximum strength at three months," added Dr. McCann. "Cuts around the orbital bone or mouth can take longer."

Dr. McCann recommends using surgical tape over the wound once the stitches have been removed. This will reduce scarring. Furthermore, a diet rich in protein, oral Vitamin A, and Zinc will accelerate healing. When at all possible, a cut should be cleared by a physician before the fighter schedules another bout.

Finally, fighters and their cornermen should keep in mind that the ring physician is not their enemy. The fight doctor is an independent member of the fighter's ringside team who is there to protect the fighter's health. ■

Dr. Goodman will be happy to answer questions about the medical aspects of boxing in future columns. Please send inquiries to: The Fight Doctor, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19304.

PHOTO BY TOM CASINO/SHOWTIME

Not every cut is a fight-ender. Junior lightweight contender Jorge Barrios (pictured) was gashed in his August 2003 bout with Acelino Freitas, but was allowed to continue. Eventually, Barrios lost via TKO in the 12th round.

COME OUT WRITING

Letters may be edited for reasons of space and clarity. Send your comments to Come Out Writing, The Ring, P.O. Box 1148, Fort Washington, PA 19034. Or e-mail letters to comeoutwriting@yahoo.com. E-mailed letters will include the writer's e-mail address unless a city and state of origin is provided.

AYALA MAKES IT OFFICIAL

It is with great regret that I must relinquish my RING junior featherweight championship. I have attempted to find an opponent, but they were either not well-known or would not fight me at 122 pounds. The only fights I have been able to make have been in the featherweight division. I hate to do this, because I am proud of my RING belt, but please accept this letter as my way of relinquishing my RING championship. Maybe one day I'll win THE RING featherweight belt.

PAULIE AYALA
Fort Worth, TX

ROBBERY LEADS TO LOSS

I believe Shane Mosley is in dire straits now because of the robbery that happened when he got an entirely undeserved decision against Oscar De La Hoya in their rematch. Had justice been done then, Shane would have corrected the flaws in his fighting style before taking on Winky Wright. At the end of his fight with Winky, Shane raised his arms, and I have no doubt that if the judges had awarded him the decision, we would have heard some more claptrap about a devastating body attack and power boxing. Then, Mosley would have stepped up to face Bernard Hopkins and gotten "executed."

GBENGA ADEBIJA
Lagos, Nigeria

PHOTO BY CHRIS FARINA

Unable to find a lucrative match at 122 pounds, Paulie Ayala has relinquished THE RING's junior featherweight championship, which he won by outpointing Bones Adams in February 2002. The classy Texan's next bout will be against Marco Antonio Barrera at the featherweight limit of 126.

JOY FOR A JOURNEYMAN

It does my heart good to see a fighter who doesn't possess a pristine record or a top-flight promoter thoroughly dominate the favorite and be rewarded on the scorecards. I am, of course, talking about journeyman Emanuel Augustus (Burton). Watching him put on a clinic against highly regarded Alex Trujillo over 12 rounds was a thing of beauty. It was as close as it gets to watching one of the old veterans of the 1940s and '50s. Trujillo had no answer for the hand speed, offense, or defensive skills of the much-traveled Augustus. He may not win all his bouts, but the top contenders and champions better not come in unprepared, because Augustus can certainly fight.

DAVID SURGICK
San Jose, CA

RAP RELIEF

Would somebody please tell me why state commissions allow these big mouths with microphones to scream unintelligible rap riffs while a professional fighter gyrates down the aisles like he just got a proctology exam from a doctor with a size 12 ring finger? Enough of this nonsense. Anyone who witnessed Cory Spinks' ring entrance before the recent Zab Judah fight was either shaking their head in disdain or doubling over in laughter. Silliness like this detracts from the seriousness of the sport and adds absolutely nothing, zilch, in entertainment value.

CRAIG M. WICK
Chicago, IL

KUDOS FOR KLITSCHKO

On the heels of his dominating pasting of Corrie Sanders, Vitali Klitschko has shown his value in the otherwise humdrum heavyweight division. Does anybody think John "The Mauler" Ruiz stirs anyone's imagination? Or that pitty-pat punching Chris Byrd lights any-

one's fire? The Ukrainian giant has the power, the chin, and the style for which we all yearn, especially the casual boxing fan. So here's to you, Vitali. Whoever you fight next, I'll be watching—and so will many more.

RON MAILLOUX
Campbell River, British Columbia

LEWIS LEFT US IN THE LURCH

If Lennox Lewis really beats the odds and resists the temptation to return to the ring, we will always wonder how he might have fared in a rematch with Vitali Klitschko. Such questions have been asked about fighters who retired on top throughout the ages: How would Rocky Marciano and Larry Holmes have done against Joe Louis and Muhammad Ali, respectively, had the latter been in their primes when they fought the former? Even though we can't help but wonder about Lewis, let's give him a little credit for not ducking any opponents and for having the good sense to retire before he became a shadow of his former self.

PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Referee Jon Schorle raises Vitali's arm following Dr. Klitschko's TKO of Corrie Sanders in Los Angeles. Readers Ron Mailloux and Constantinos E. Scaros write with their opinions on the new heavyweight champion and his field of challengers.

I agree that Lewis is not in the top tier of all-time heavyweight greats. In fact, I suspect that had he fought Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield in their primes, the outcomes easily could have been very different. Which is why I place Lewis behind those two fighters when ranking the post-Ali heavyweights.

The most noticeable phenomenon of Lewis' retirement is the void he leaves behind in the heavyweight division. The ancient Mike Tyson and Evander Holyfield, the inconsistent Klitschko brothers, the pit-patting Chris Byrd, and the blown-up (albeit spectacular) Roy Jones do not a heavyweight division make. It's hard to believe that at one time the likes of Ali, Joe Frazier, George Foreman, and Ken Norton were all fighting in the division *at the same time*. Those were the glory days.

CONSTANTINOS E. SCAROS
Cliffside Park, NJ

AGE DIFFERENCE

On April 3, 2004, Sharmba Mitchell fought Mike Stewart on Showtime. As usual, Mitchell was announced as being 33 years old. One problem: They have been announcing him as being 33 for at least four years now. He's got to be 37 or 38. What's Mitchell's real age?

JOHN M. JAMES
Oklahoma City, OK

[Editor's note: Mitchell was born on August 27, 1970, which made him 33 years old at the time of the Stewart fight.]

A VOTE FOR VARGAS

I'm writing in response to all the trash I hear about Fernando Vargas from my buddies at work and sometimes even from magazine articles. There's a lot of things about Vargas that I don't like, but he's one of a handful of guys I can count on to show up and fight. I don't have to worry about watching a clinch-fest or a guy who dodges punches by running. When Vargas fights, somebody is going to get knocked out. And give me a break about Vargas' glass jaw. If getting stopped after fighting your heart out against Trinidad or De La Hoya gives you a glass jaw, then I guess guys like Julio Cesar Chavez, Rafael Ruelas, James Leija, and my favorite, Arturo Gatti, all have glass jaws. So the next time you hear somebody take a shot at Vargas, ask them to tell you the last time they paid to see him in a boring fight.

RICK GEORGI
San Francisco, CA

GETTING A KICK OUT OF BYRD

I want to give a big shout-out to Chris Byrd. Mr. Byrd, you are definitely the most underappreciated fighter out there, and I want you to know that there actually are people wha understand your brilliance. Your inspiration helped me win the Swedish cruiserweight Kickboxing Championships in 2002, standing only 5'10" and clean of steroids.

TOM NORGREN
Solna, Sweden ■

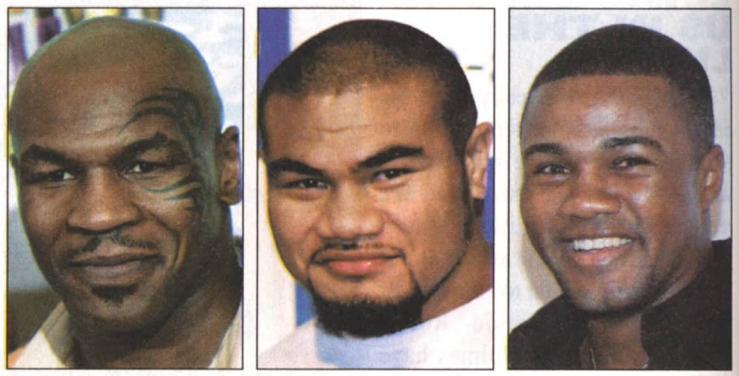
PHOTO BY WILL HART/HBO

Not everybody is turned on by Chris Byrd's evasive boxing style, but reader Tom Norgren not only appreciates Byrd's boxing skill, he was inspired by the fact that a relatively small man can hold his own with much larger men such as Andrew Golota (pictured).

LOOKING AHEAD

By Eric Raskin

T3: KAYO ARTISTS ON THE COMEBACK TRAIL



Tyson, Tua, and Trinidad: Comebacks coming

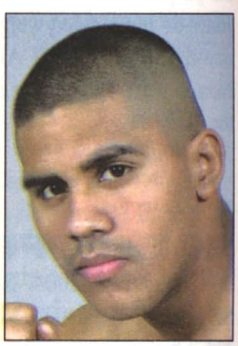
With all due respect to the mad skills of some of boxing's slickest stylists, it's the punchers who keep the turnstiles moving. Even when a big banger is past his best, his ability to end a fight with one colossal shot tends to get the masses interested in a way that the technical masters can't.

Well, masses, prepare to get interested. Three of your favorite punchers are getting ready to end protracted layoffs, and even though one of them is definitely past his best and the other two probably are as well, chances are good that we're going to see the three T's—**Tyson**, **Trinidad**, and **Tua**—"T" off on some unfortunate opponents in the latter half of 2004.

You never know quite what to believe when it comes to Mike Tyson, but according to adviser **Shelly Finkel**, the 37-year-old former heavyweight champ will return to the ring on July 31, ending what will by then have been a 17-month layoff. The bout will be promoted by K-1, the martial arts outfit with which Tyson signed a contract last August, and Tyson will be trained by 2003 Trainer of the Year **Freddie Roach**, who also prepared "Iron Mike" for his lone fight last year. As for the opponent, the leading candidate as of press time was unaccomplished, soft-chinned, Massachusetts-based Irishman **Kevin McBride**. Gee, what other Tyson comeback victim does that description remind us of? Should be interesting to see whether McBride can last more than 89 seconds.

The comeback fight of Felix Trinidad is shaping up to be considerably more competitive. After a hiatus of nearly two years, "Tito" is planning to return on October 2 with a pay-per-view showdown against fellow former welterweight champ **Ricardo Mayorga**. Trinidad will reportedly be paid $10-million plus a healthy percentage of the PPV profits. And with the bout taking place at middleweight, we shouldn't have to worry too much about Mayorga foiling the fight on the scales.

Lastly, there's David Tua, who's been inactive since March '03, mostly because of extended legal wrangling with former managers **Kevin Barry** and **David Pugh**. Tua says he'll finally be ready to return to the ring in August, and although he's not nearly the star Tyson and Trinidad are, the timing is right for "Tuaman" to matter. The heavyweight rankings are as thin as they've been in recent memory, and a slugger like Tua—even though he hasn't scored a significant win in a couple of years—could instantly inject a little life into the division. First, however, Tua has some serious training to do. The Samoan admitted to weighing almost 270 pounds in April, which can't possibly be distributed well on his 5'10" frame.

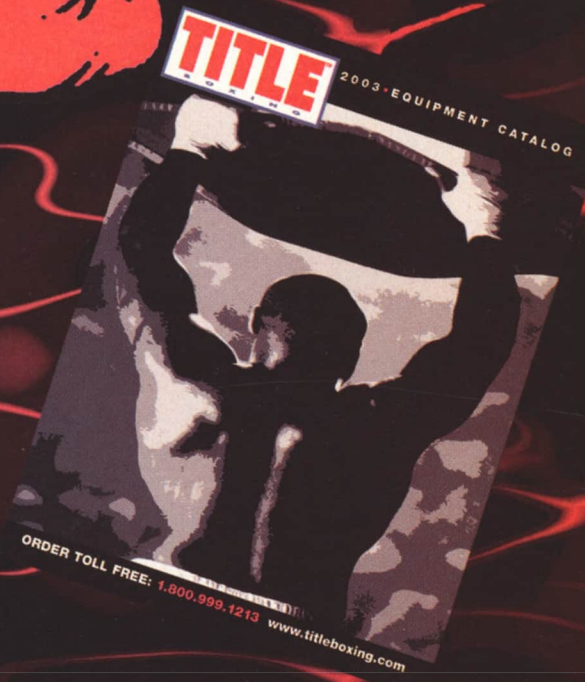


Diaz: 20-year-old goes for a belt this summer

LISTEN UP

Main Events prospects **Rocky Juarez**, **Juan Diaz**, and **Francisco "Panchito" Bojado** weren't just adding wins to their records and scoring fantastic exposure when they fought on NBC this spring; they were also trying out for HBO. All three passed their auditions, so in July, they'll all appear on the pay-cable giant. On July 17, Diaz will become the first of the bunch to challenge for a major alphabet belt when he takes on lightweight titlist **Lakva Sim**, while featherweight Juarez will appear in the co-feature against tricky veteran **Manuel Medina**. No site had been set as of press time, but Houston (the hometown of both Diaz and Juarez) sure seems to make sense. The following Saturday, on the July 24 **Arturo Gatti-Leonard Dorin** show, it'll be Bojado in the co-feature, taking on the always dangerous **Jesse James Leija**. In the deep junior welterweight division, this intriguing bout could earn the winner a top-10 RING ranking. ■

TITLE
BOXING



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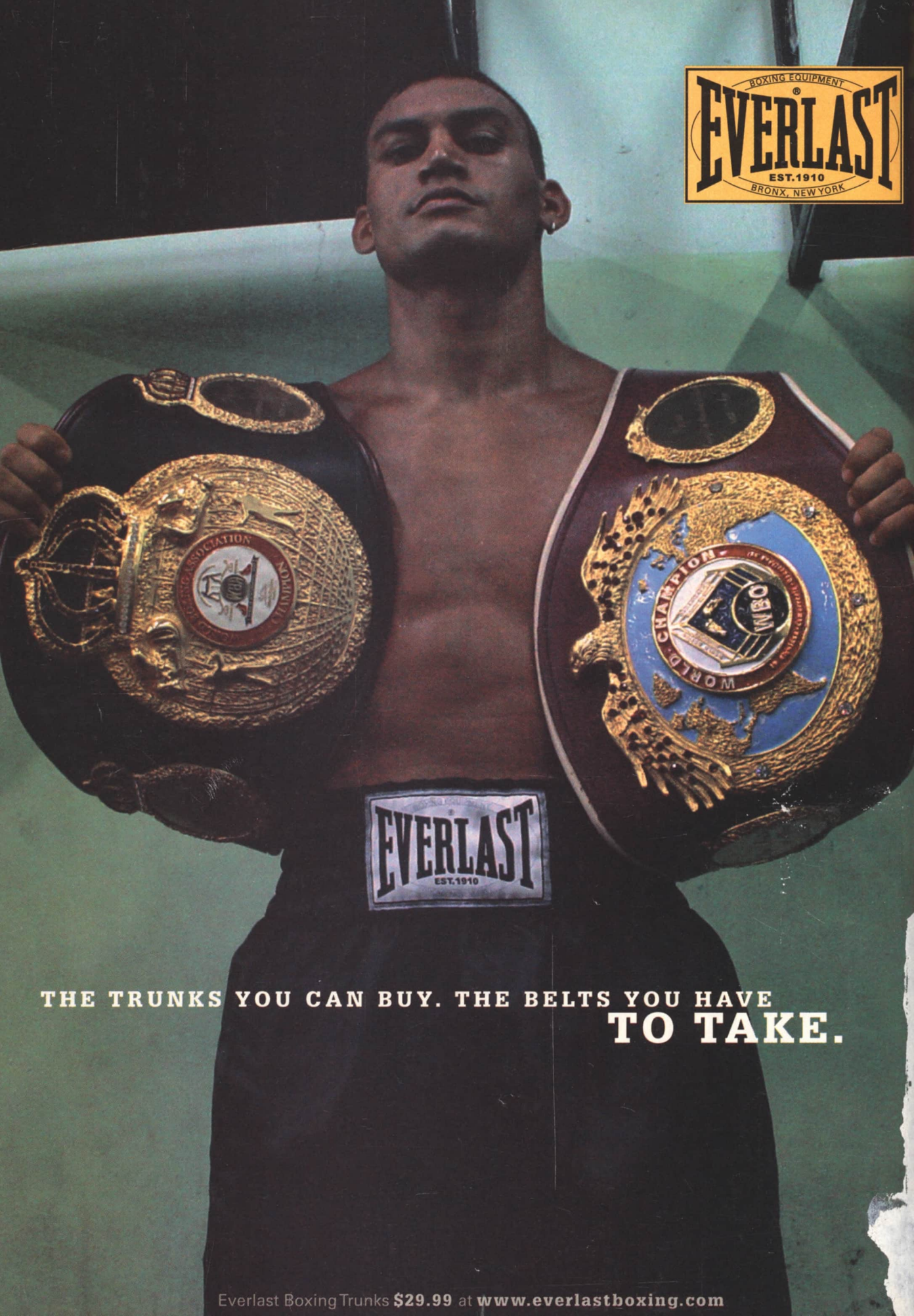
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